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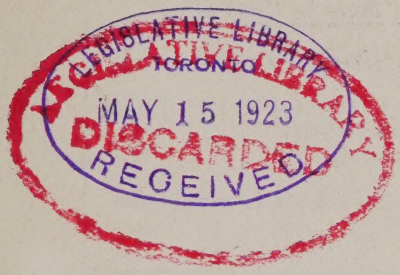

THE LOG OF A WOMAN WANDERER

Books by Ralph Stock

SOUTH OF THE LINE 7/6

THE CRUISE OF THE DREAM SHIP
Illustrated. 15/-

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD.

Frontispiece.

THE LOG AND THE WOMAN WANDERER

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THE LOG OF A WOMAN WANDERER

BY

MABEL M. STOCK

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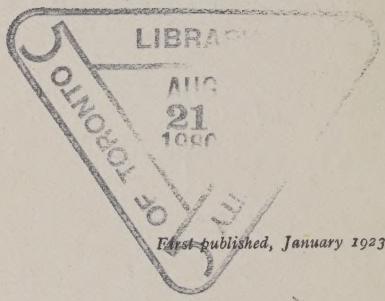
LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD



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TO

THE BROTHER AND THE BOAT

WITHOUT WHOM THE CRUISE

WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE

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I

Introduces the crew—Describes our floating home—We take a passenger—We set sail—Arrival at our first port.

HAVING been told by a number of people that I have accomplished rather an unusual thing for a woman, it has occurred to me that some of my own sex may be interested to read of my experiences during a 12,000-mile cruise as "hand" aboard a 21-ton cutter during her voyage from Brixham, Devonshire, to the South Sea Islands.

To begin with, I must point out that the keynote of our undertaking was economy, for I do not think such an impecunious trio ever set sail on a long cruise.

Ever since the war had nipped in the bud a former enterprise of this kind, it had been a long-cherished dream to sail our own ship through the South Sea Islands. As we were afraid of growing old and decrepit before accumulating really sufficient means for the

undertaking, we made up our minds to start without them, and stand by the consequences.

Before going farther I had better introduce the ship's company. It consisted of my brother, to whom the *Ogre* belonged, and who bore all expenses of fitting out, harbour dues, running expenses, etc.; Steve, a friend who relied solely on his army gratuity and pension as a wounded officer; and myself, the owner of an infinitesimal income.

In order to accumulate enough money before departure, I resorted to the selling of a few sticks of furniture I possessed, pieces of jewellery, and even some of my music; and as I could be of no use to the boys while fitting out the *Ogre*, I took a most unpleasant position as nurse-companion to an exacting old invalid lady, in order to save the expense of board and lodging during the four months before sailing. By this means I scraped and saved enough to buy a modest *trousseau*, pay my share of the ship's stores and trade goods, and start with a little under £100.

The *Ogre* deserves a short description, as a more suitable craft could not have been found for our purpose. She was built in Norway as

a life-boat for the fishing fleet, and sold to a man who fitted her below as a yacht. She was 47 feet "over all," 15 feet beam, 7 feet 6 inches draft, cutter-rigged, with a 13 h.p. auxiliary engine. Her spars were enormously stout and strong, and her sails of exceptionally good canvas.

Below decks she was like a compact little flat: fo'castle, saloon, sleeping cabin, and engine-room, each leading into the other with no alley-ways to take up unnecessary space; and when both hatches were open, a draught could pass straight through from stem to stern, which was a boon in hot weather. In the fo'castle were two built-in bunks, one of which Steve occupied; the cooking—such as it was—was done there on primus stoves screwed to the table, which formed the top of one of the fresh-water tanks, holding 150 gallons. Lockers ran along each side and served as seats. The cupboards would have gladdened the heart of any housewife. There were four of them: one for crockery, with grooves, ledges, and circles cut in the shelves to hold the various articles firm in a seaway; one for pots and pans, fitted in the same manner; one for

"retail" stores, as we called them ; and one as a larder.

The saloon looked like a charming little sitting-room when the loose covers of blue and green Liberty cretonne were on the cushions. The mast case, jutting out from the forward end, formed a cosy corner on one side. The piano stood across the bulkhead between cabin and saloon ; and one of the four commodious cupboards formed a little sideboard, on which reposed our smoking impedimenta, and a minute rum barrel made of polished elm with brass bands and tap. Tall lockers lined each side of the saloon, the tops of which served as shelves for books, writing-cases, and that sort of thing ; the table stood to one side, allowing ample floor space.

The sleeping cabin, upholstered in blue and white, was occupied by my brother and myself, and had one built-in bunk on each side with divans beneath, containing spacious lockers. Curtains, that slipped along rods, ran each side of the washstand from one bulkhead to the other, so that whoever desired to wash could do so at any time in complete privacy, in spite of the bunks being occupied. Two hanging

"OGRE" AS A FISHING SMACK

wardrobes completed the furniture. Of course, all cushion covers and "pretties" were packed away while making passages. Both saloon and cabin were enamelled white.

The engine-room contained the oil tank, all gear, tools, another fresh-water tank holding 150 gallons, and the 13 h.p. engine.

Such was our floating home.

About a month before we sailed, my brother wrote for me to meet Steve and himself in London, to procure passports and to purchase the £30 worth of "trade goods" we had decided to take with us. I had already "given notice" to my old lady; but, as she was *really* ill at that time (she always made a point of being inconvenient), I could not leave for some days. Meanwhile the boys had done the deed, and when I met them they showed me the still unpaid bills of the wholesale firms to which they had been recommended for such articles as fish-hooks, beads, combs, pipes, leather belts, sheath knives, Jews' harps, mouth-organs, looking-glasses, and cotton materials. The description on the invoice of the last-named struck me as sounding most unsuitable for natives who wore no undergarments, being

mostly transparent materials such as voiles and ninons. I asked what induced them to choose such idiotic materials, to which my brother replied, that the flowers on them were so pretty, and the colours more "harmonious" than those of the calicoes and prints. Steve said that in pictures Indian coolie women always swathed themselves in diaphanous draperies, so he imagined it was the correct thing. I decided to visit the wholesale house and ask if a change of goods could be effected. The boys said at once, "How like a woman to give a lot of unnecessary trouble to the wretched shop-assistants!" But as it was a question of sinking a portion of our small capital in an endeavour to make money for carrying through our enterprise, I bearded the manager, and made the exchange most amicably.

Procuring passports and having them viséd was no joke, and it took so long that only a few days could be spent by my brother in choosing charts, and I finishing the purchase of my *trousseau*.

For months I had been buying materials when I saw anything reasonably cheap, and had sent them to a dressmaker who had made for

me ever since I left school. She had all my measurements, and I used to send a sketch with each batch of material. She would make the dress, all but the finishing touches, at her leisure, and keep it for me to try on later. In that way, one morning's fitting was sufficient for the lot. Of course I chose simple styles that would allow of this, straight-down frocks that would be cool, and could be worn without corsets. The two evening dresses and riding kit were another matter, and I had to have those sent to Devonshire after me. I had gradually laid in a store of underwear, kimonos, etc., whenever I could afford them, and seven or eight pairs of serviceable pyjamas, with two or three skirts to match, that could be quickly slipped on when making land, one or two thin coats and skirts, a good tropical mackintosh, a Shantung dust-coat, boots, shoes, and slippers of every description, completed my outfit.

With light hearts we travelled down to Devonshire, where the boys took up a course in navigation, and I tried to imbibe enough knowledge to be of some help to them ; but, what with the handicap of a brain that absolutely refused to cope with the subject,

and with very little time in which to attend to my department of the *Ogre*, namely, scrubbing and cleaning after the workmen, making new curtains and cushion covers, and salting 30 lbs. of Devonshire butter, I gave up the struggle and left them to it.

Our instructor was a dear old Danish sea-captain, who took the greatest interest in our enterprise, and when, with some diffidence, we asked if he would accompany us as far as Vigo to put us in the way of things, he at once complied, though he had not been to sea for twenty-six years, and it meant leaving his little school of navigation, a comfortable home, and the kindliest wife. She was a remarkable woman, and still young-looking. In the old days she and the four children always went to sea in the three-masted schooner commanded by her husband. She used to do most of the cooking, repair the sails, mend for the crew, and generally "mother" the ship's company. On one occasion, off the coast of Florida, she took the ship into port when the captain and crew were down with beriberi. Some way from the coast, a tug came out to salvage them, but she refused to accept their aid, thus

saving the owners some thousands of pounds. They were so appreciative that they presented her with a grand piano! She wept!! Her husband mentioned this to his company, and they substituted a cheque for £100.

Never shall I forget packing away the stores. When I tell you that we took sufficient of most commodities for three months, and of the things that would keep a six months' supply, you will be able to realise a little what a hopeless feeling swept over me when it came to stowing them away in so small a space.

We went alongside the quay at Brixham, and the carts containing our stuff were backed to the edge of it, from whence everything was pitched on to the deck until it seemed piled half-way up the mast with boxes, tins, packing-cases, sacks, and barrels. Of course it rained! And the wretched provision merchant, who accompanied the goods, insisted upon my checking each item as it was dumped on deck from above. It was a nightmare trying to get the perishable things below before they were saturated.

Luckily, the next morning was fine, so at my leisure I could stow away everything. It

meant making a separate list of what went into each locker or cupboard, and against every item putting a number of strokes corresponding to the number of tins or pots, as the case might be. Each list was pasted on the inside of its individual locker lid, and the strokes crossed off as the stores were used. By this means we knew exactly how much of a commodity was left. Then I wrote out a comprehensive list to indicate in which locker or cupboard each kind of food could be found. It may sound simple enough, but it took me two whole days to satisfactorily stow all the stores, for tins had to be fitted into lockers which sloped to the shape of the ship's side. Over and over again I had to pack and repack those wretched cavities so that all should fit in exactly and nothing shift when we started to roll.

Steve offered to hand the commodities as I called for them, but he became so weary of my "finnikiness" as he called it, that he returned to assist my brother with the work on deck.

Several times during our cruise I patted myself on the back with regard to that same "finnikiness," as the only mortalities were a

jar of jam and a bottle of lime-juice, whose cork came out and caused the sticky fluid to dribble into a 40-lb. sack of brown sugar.

One locker was kept for "emergency rations" in case we had to abandon ship, and this contained ship's biscuits, tinned meat, tobacco, cigarettes, and a bottle full of matches. Our emergency breaker was lashed on the port side of the deck.

While alongside the quay, we took on the 300 gallons of fresh water which was the limit of our tanks. We arranged that each member of the crew should be allowed three-quarters of a gallon per day to be used as he pleased, and the other quarter of a gallon to be used for culinary purposes.

It must be mentioned that while attending navigation lessons, the boys conceived the brilliant idea of advertising for a passenger who would pay to be conveyed to the South Seas in a far more original, though less luxurious, manner than by steamer. We were loath to break into our friendly trio, but acquisition of pelf was an absolute necessity, so we inserted an advertisement in one of the weekly illustrated papers, and the extraordinary

letters in reply would fill pages. No mention of remuneration was made in most of them. Several applicants wished to get out of England as it proved an unpleasant country after the war.

One, lacking both sea experience and money, would be willing to work for his passage and board to any country far removed from England. He would have been useful to us considering we were almost novices ourselves.

Another was a great admirer of my brother's South Sea stories, wanted to study his methods, and would be willing to accompany us if we could see our way to supplying his food and kit. As my brother's methods consist in yawning loudly, bewailing a dearth of ideas, and of offering me vast sums of money for plots which I am as unable to supply as I was to study navigation, this particular applicant would not have found it a money-making proposition, I am afraid.

Several women applied, for the most part through lack of occupation after having worked hard during the war, and feeling at a loose end. The majority of these offered large sums to accompany us, and my brother thought it would be an excellent idea if I considered one

of them. But, as I pointed out to him, I did not know a single one of my own friends I would have cared to ask to join us ; for much as I should have liked the congenial companionship, I thought it required a special brand of woman for the job in hand. I don't for a moment wish to intimate that I consider myself a paragon in any way, but as I had done something of the sort before—though in a much smaller way—I knew the drawbacks that would confront a woman who started with the idea of having "a lovely time."

To begin with, it requires excellent health, also more muscular strength than is ordinary to the average girl. I am thankful to say I possess both these, for I have been keen on gymnastics, mountain climbing, riding, etc., ever since I was a kiddie ; and during the war was employed in manual labour of a rather strenuous description. Another thing is, the life aboard so small a ship as the *Ogre* entails very intimate—some would say immodest—associations with the other sex. For example, more than once, if "All hands on deck" was shouted, it was my job to dash to the tiller and keep the ship on her course. Whoever had

been below was probably clothed in nothing but a towel, owing to the great heat, and when rushing on deck to help, his exertions might deprive him of even that.

Again, the least exacting woman expects certain little courtesies which it would be impossible to accord under the circumstances ; that is why I made a stipulation with the boys that they should treat me like a man *while on board*, and that we should all work exactly alike as regarded the daily routine. Added to this, there was the possibility that the lady might weary of such conditions lasting for months and perhaps years (for we had no idea how long our cruise would last), and wish to leave us ; in which case it would be impossible to dump her alone at even a civilised port, much less on some South Sea island ; and to continue to carry an unwilling victim was not to be contemplated at any price. Thus it was that, thinking none of my intimates suited to our undertaking, I vetoed the idea of carrying a perfect stranger, even though she were willing to pay a small fortune for that doubtful privilege.

The only really satisfactory answer to the

advertisement came from an old yachtsman who had just retired from business, and hearkened to the call of Adventure at the age of sixty-three.

He ran down to Devonshire to inspect the yacht and crew, and, incidentally, to be inspected himself. Mutual satisfaction. He slept the night aboard, and left after arranging to become our passenger as far as Tahiti, Society Islands, and, if he wished to continue the motion to Australia, could do so by paying an additional sum. He told us he could not leave by the date we meant to sail, so would go by steamer to Grand Canary, where we could pick him up at Las Palmas on a given date. Great joy on my part, as I knew that I could occupy my berth in the cabin, and not have to turn out for a few weeks longer. For, of course, being a passenger, we had to give him the best of everything, and arranged that he and Steve should share the sleeping cabin, and my brother and I the fo'castle. The bunks were all equally comfortable, being supplied with spring mattresses under the horse-hair ones, but I loved my side of the cabin, and had fixed it up so that I had a place for everything. That is a very necessary thing

on any craft, I should imagine, but far more so on a small yacht. "A place for everything, and everything in its right place." My brother is naturally very tidy for a man, but Steve—poor old chap! how he suffered at our hands! He really did improve though, for I think he discovered that by stowing things neatly, he could find them more easily when wanted; also, when not rolling all over the place, they were less damaged.

The day came for us to sail. We had arranged, if the wind was favourable, to leave our mooring early on a Sunday morning, in order to have as few spectators as possible; for it was well known in a little fishing village like Brixham what we contemplated doing. We were thankful afterwards that we had taken this precaution, for our getaway was anything but clean.

Our old captain came aboard at 5.30 sharp, bringing with him a corrugated iron dustbin in which he had salted our beef. This was stowed below in a lazarette under the floor boards of the fo'castle, and wedged in place with reserve tins of petrol.

Then we proceeded to haul in the dinghy;

in letting it down to the deck from the bulwarks the stern end of the keel fell on the poor old captain's big toe. He bore it stoically and said very little at the time, but later on it swelled alarmingly, and he was afraid it was broken ; but when I demonstrated that he could move it at will he was somewhat reassured. When the dinghy was at last in position on the starboard side of the deck, Steve, by mistake, sat heavily on one of the skylights and it closed with a bang, crushing one of his fingers badly. The bone was intact, but little else, and for weeks it was exceedingly painful ; eventually the nail came off completely, and the finger will always be out of shape at the top.

Our next task was to hoist sail and let go our moorings. But our mooring cable fouled the buoy, and, in getting free, we barged into a fishing smack, and swung round so that our bowsprit collided with the shrouds of the other vessel. Every instant we expected the bowsprit to snap, as there was a pretty stiff breeze at the time, and the strain must have been tremendous. "Cursing never helped any, my lads," said the captain, when he heard what Steve and my brother could do in that particular line.

We sailed with a steady N.W. wind, and bowled along finely until it became so fresh that we lowered the topsail before night came on.

Valiantly the captain stuck to the tiller, though he suffered considerably from sea-sickness. He arranged that he and Steve should take a six-hour watch from twelve to six, and my brother and I from six to twelve. It required two on deck, as the weather became rather nasty, and on our third night out it blew half a gale. The two below, when off watch, had no slack time either, as things we thought satisfactorily lashed came adrift. The oil tank, which was on a stout rack in the engine-room, broke its fastenings and lurched almost on to the engine. It was impossible to shift it back into place, as the weight of 50 gallons of oil, plus the tank itself, was beyond our strength, so we wedged it with planks. The washstand in the cabin also broke from its staples and pitched sideways, carrying with it a 30-lb. drum of oatmeal which stood beside it, as the only possible place to stow so bulky an article. The water tank in the fo'castle, whose lid had been imperfectly screwed down, slopped waves of

our precious fresh water on the floor, and this ran in picturesque waterfalls over the step into the saloon, where it was allowed to remain in a pond, mixing with the brine, which, for the last two days, had been oozing from a case of pickled pork wedged under the table. This conglomeration soaked round the edges of the oilcloth, and through the floor boards into the bilge. A little dampness more or less was a matter of indifference to us just then.

By the following night the wind had died down, but the sea remained very high, and we rolled to such an extent that our boom smashed about six feet from the end. Great consternation on our part, but the captain remained unmoved, although it nearly brained him, and most of the mainsail went overboard. As it was a black-dark night, the skipper thought we had better leave closer inspection until daylight. So we lowered the mainsail and hoisted the squaresail, as the wind was sufficiently aft to allow of it. I must explain that this squaresail was rigged on a yard twenty-five feet long, that travelled on a jackstay up the mast, and was a perfect godsend to us. With a good stiff breeze aft it bowled us along

at about eight knots ; if the wind was variable, but mostly not too much on the beam, we could square it round to act as a mainsail, and so save changing sails too often, which becomes a great labour when the spars are as heavy as ours were, and when the crew consists of such light-weights as respectively 10 stone, 10 stone 3 lbs. and 8 stone 2 lbs. If the breeze was very light, a "bonnet," or additional strip of sail, could be laced on to the bottom. Why it should not have been at the top I don't know, considering its name.

The next morning at daylight we inspected the damage, and found we were able to take a double reef in the mainsail, and make the cringle fast to the broken end of the boom.

We sighted the coast of Spain just as the job was finished, and from then on the wind died down until midday, when my brother, who amongst other things was engineer, had to start up the engine. After lunch the others turned in for a much-needed rest, and I took charge until tea-time.

The sensation of slowly gliding along on a level keel in the warm sunshine was a perfect joy after the bucketing we had been through.

To me, there is nothing that makes one feel so thoroughly tired all through as to be pitched about for any length of time at sea.

Just as it was getting dark we reached the mouth of the Vigo river, and once again the engine was in requisition in order to take us up to the town of Vigo, which is on the left bank. Of course we could see none of the scenery, but here and there twinkling lights appeared where villages nestled close to the water. At last a most imposing cluster came into view, so we knew we had made our first port in safety. We let go the anchor at 1.30 a.m., put up the riding light, and turned in utterly weary, and very thankful to have level bunks.

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II

Courtship under difficulties—Exit the captain—We three and the *Ogre*—Modes of waking and keeping awake—Las Palmas—We engage a cook—Canary fever.

Our intention was to sleep late in order to make up for what we had lost, but soon after 5 a.m. we were disturbed by two men coming aboard to see what they could sell us in the way of stores and wine. We roundly cursed them, and said all we wanted was *sleep*. Either they were slow of understanding, or else Steve's halting Spanish—of which he had picked up a smattering years ago in South America—sounded worse to them than it did to us, for they smilingly seated themselves on the fo'castle hatch and started rolling cigarettes, and chatting to each other in voices that could be heard ashore. No sooner had we made them understand that they were not wanted, and bowed them politely into their boat, than the port official came aboard to see our ship's papers. After that it was useless to try and sleep, so we

cleaned up ship, and incidentally ourselves, and went ashore.

Vigo is a charming town, built on a steep slope above the river, with a beautiful view of the opposite bank about two miles away. Some of the old parts of the town with steep narrow streets are exceedingly picturesque, and the market is quite one of the sights.

Our old captain was dressed in thick serge clothes, and I presume "wore flannel next his skin," for he felt the heat terribly; and his toe gave him great trouble, as the streets were made of cobble stones, and most of the pavements very uneven. We had suggested that he should go ashore in slippers, never dreaming they would be of the "carpet" variety, and bright colours at that. However, no one stared at him unduly, and if they had, I think he would have been oblivious.

Our first business was to cable to the captain's "old woman" of our safe arrival, and to book a return passage for him. At last we succeeded in getting a berth on a boat sailing in a week's time, which was a great blow to him, as he was anxious to return to his pupils as soon as possible. However, I think he put in

a pleasant time in Vigo, in spite of yearnings for home, a sore toe, and unsuitable underclothing. Most of the day he preferred to wander up the river in the dinghy, sit on deck and read, or do odd jobs about the ship. He also advised my brother about the repairing of our damaged boom. In the evening we often took him to the Alamada, a public place planted with trees and shrubs, and with chairs and seats dotted about. Here all the rank and fashion of Vigo repaired in the cool of the evening, to stroll about and chat with friends to the accompaniment of a good band.

What struck us most was the charming little children. Many of the tiny girls were miniature fashion plates, wearing beautiful silks and muslins laundered in the most wonderful manner ; but there the simile ended, for they were absolutely unaffected ; and, without the slightest self-consciousness, would sway and dance to the music in a manner that would have been ridiculous in English children.

At first it struck us that the "flappers" had rather a thin time of it, for as a rule one youth would be the centre of a bevy of girls ; but a friend, who accompanied us one evening, ex-

plained that Spanish etiquette forbade a girl to be alone at any time with one of the opposite sex. So girls took it in turns to chaperon each other, and if they had any sense, would go about in numbers, so that the "gooseberries" could indulge in noisy conversation, in order to drown the young couple's murmured words.

It seems that, when a young man desires to marry a certain girl, he has to spend months in making love at a distance. We saw one couple doing this in the open street. The Señorita was leaning from a second-floor balcony, gazing down at a man standing below. He was obliged to take up his position in the centre of the road in order to get a good view of his *inamorata*. Traffic made not the slightest difference, he just stepped into the gutter, or backed to the other side of the road, never ceasing the eloquent movements of his fingers and hands, which had to take the place of spoken words, and seemed quite comprehensible to the girl, who responded in like manner. Passers-by took not the slightest notice, but I should think we stood for nearly ten minutes watching proceedings until the lady saw us, and, catching my brother's eye, smiled and

waved a hand. He naturally responded with a sweeping bow, whereupon the lover wheeled round to see the cause of that radiant smile, and scowled in a manner one associates with a melodramatic villain. Steve was most annoyed, and told my brother such things were not *done* in Spain.

When a lover has quite made up his mind that he has found the one and only girl, he approaches her parents. If they consent to the match, the youth has real hard work and an expensive time in store, for whenever he takes his "girl" out for a motor drive, to theatre or concert, not only the mother or sister chaperons her, but the entire family.

I must not omit to mention that we engaged an awful-looking ruffian, called Tonio, as watchman, to look after the *Ogre* when we all went ashore together, and to row us to and from the quay. Although recommended by the port official, he proved anything but satisfactory, in spite of affording us much amusement. When he rowed us ashore, having deposited us on the quay, he would paddle the dinghy a little way out—as boats were not allowed to remain alongside—lie down on the seat, with one

cushion under his head and another in the small of his back, and fall asleep. There he would repose until our return, when shouting and pelting him with stones utterly failed to rouse him. Nothing short of one of his own countrymen going out and rocking the dinghy until he rolled off the seat would bring him back to consciousness. One day his cap, an awful affair of bright blue plush, fell into the water during his slumbers ; with an ingratiating smile, showing awful gaps between discoloured teeth, he asked my brother to replace it, as it was lost in his service. Frequently, while in town, we would see Tonio slinking into a wine-shop when he ought to have been minding our dinghy and keeping an eye on the *Ogre*, for we were told to leave nothing unguarded, as everything, however small and insignificant, was valuable in the eyes of the waterside folk.

The British colony at Vigo treated us with the greatest kindness, and the boys had some excellent tennis at the bachelor quarters of the Eastern Cable Co. Very often the bachelors came off to bathe from the deck of the *Ogre*, stay to tea, and afterwards we would have a

"sing-song" on deck, with me perspiring at the piano below.

One evening we were motored out to a little place called Cabral, and dined beneath vines, which were trained up square stone pillars.

The British Consul invited us to lunch, and we reciprocated by asking him aboard to dinner. This entailed great preparations, and, as he did not leave until late, we were still washing up at 1.30 a.m.

As time passed, it was borne in upon us that our 100 lbs. of salt pork under the saloon table was a frost, or, rather, a thaw. It still continued to exude brine, so we opened up the case and found such an appalling-looking mess that we decided to try and do a dicker with the gentlemen who had disturbed our slumbers on the morning after our arrival. We therefore bade Tonio fetch them aboard, and when we suggested that we were willing to sacrifice some good English pork for the sake of ten gallons of "vino tinto"—the *vin ordinaire* of the country—they fell over each other to row ashore and fetch the wine, which we emptied into one of our water breakers; and very good it proved until it went sour some

four or five days later! So much for the "pork in brine" that had cost us a good round sum in England.

We decided to sail early the morning of the day the captain's steamer left; so we were astir before dawn, and, having breakfasted, weighed anchor. This was pretty hard work, as there is deep water just off the town, and we were thankful to have the captain's assistance. We motored alongside the wharf, and deposited the captain and his suit-case thereon. Our farewells had already been said, and it was with tears in his eyes that he wished us good luck. I do not know what the boys' feelings were, but I could have howled when we chugged away down the river, leaving that lonely old man with his suit-case standing on the quay, shouting last instructions to us. I knew how we should miss his moral and physical support, to say nothing of his cheery good-nature, should we find ourselves in any fix; and if I had given way to my feelings, I fear that the tail-end of the howl would have been for ourselves.

It may be remembered that it was dark when we made our way up the Vigo river a week

before, but going down at sunrise was a treat I am glad we did not miss. The boys had to continually tell me to "get a move on," as I stood looking at the lovely surroundings instead of getting down to work.

We now arranged the watches so that each had four hours on and eight off, and that the cooking should be done in shifts of a week each. Of course it made rather hard work for the wretched individual whose job it was to do the "chores," but with only three, no other way seemed possible. Each Sunday night we changed watches, in order to vary the times on duty; being unable to help with the navigation, I took on all the lamps and brass cleaning, to try and equalise matters.

On reaching the mouth of the Vigo river we hoisted sail, and as there was a fresh breeze from the N.N.W., were well out of sight of land before midday, when I took the tiller, and Steve dived below to start in with his first attempt at cooking, for I had undertaken that duty during the captain's *régime*. The wind held during the day, died away at sunset, but revived again after dark.

I started my 12–4 night watch wishing it

were safely over, for though I was not actually nervous, I felt a sense of responsibility in handling the *Ogre* quite alone for the first time. My brother was most decent in telling me not to mind calling him if I felt at all doubtful what to do. Luckily, everything went smoothly, and all I had to do was to sit on the side of the steering well and hold the *Ogre* on her course. I was too new to it to feel at all sleepy that night, but later on, all of us suffered agonies of drowsiness during our night watches. The mere fact of keeping one's eyes fixed on the swinging compass card, brightly lighted by the binnacle lamps, while all else was in darkness, gave one a sort of hypnotised feeling that was very difficult to shake off, apart from having broken rest during successive nights, which it was seldom possible to make up in the day-time.

In the morning we compared notes as to the different means adopted to keep awake. Steve used to go through all the poetry he could remember, then try and say it backwards. My brother alternately prodded himself with a marlin-spike and racked his brains for plots. I used to take my relations and friends, one by

one, resolutely visualise them, and hold imaginary conversations with each ; after that, go through my repertoire of songs ; then decide what kind of puddings I could devise out of the ship's stores for my next week's "cookment," and mentally enact the process of cooking them. We found strong coffee very helpful, and whoever was cook used to make far more than would be required for breakfast each morning, and save it for use at night.

At first we had an alarm clock, which each set at the time for the next man to go on watch, but this became rusted in the damp atmosphere of the tropics, and the man on watch had to go down and rouse the next victim. Sometimes this caused a rude awakening, for if there was any kind of a sea running, it meant pegging the tiller, dashing down the engine-room ladder, shaking the sleeper and rushing back, perhaps just in time to save a jibe.

One day we discussed our different modes of waking. My brother always heaved a huge sigh, opened his eyes half-way, his mouth fully in a cavernous yawn, and said, "How's she going ?" then sometimes fell promptly to sleep

THE DAILY STRUGGLE—FINDING THE SHIP'S POSITION

again without waiting for a reply. With Steve it was as well to keep one's distance, for he had a nasty way of hitting out. But sometimes he would cover with his own the hand that touched him, and press it fervently, then realise what was expected of him and murmur "Right-o!" My brother said I always lay with my mouth wide open and my face all on one side, but when roused these returned to their normal positions; and there it ended, which sounds dull, not to say extremely unattractive.

Seven days out from Vigo we sighted Madeira, just where it ought to be. Great excitement and congratulations, for it must be remembered that this was the first test of the amateur navigators; and, after seeing nothing but two steamers and a few sea-gulls for a week, the sight of land was very welcome, to say nothing of the sense of security it gave for the future, as to whether the theoretical lessons in navigation would hold good when put into practice.

Two days later we sighted the Salvage Islands, a couple of small islands surrounded by rocks. No one lives there, but Portuguese fishermen go at certain seasons to salt down

their catches. The islands swarm with rabbits, so one would not starve if wrecked there, but as there is practically no fresh water, one would have an unpleasant time.

Passing the islands within two miles or so, we held on.

Next day, when sights were taken, we thought we had lost our bearings, as at that distance we ought to have sighted the Canary Islands. However, just before sunset we saw the peak of Teneriffe above a mist on the horizon. We slowed down as much as possible during the night. At daylight we erected the staff with the Blue Ensign, hoisted our burgee and the pilot flag, and made for Grand Canary, reaching Las Palmas about noon. The pilot came out to meet us, and I steered at his direction, while my brother strove in the engine-room, and Steve stood by to heave the anchor overboard.

Long before we entered the harbour, crafts of all sorts came out to see what curious specimen had drifted to their coast. The "bum-boatmen" were the greatest nuisance, for they clambered aboard without invitation and started crying their wares in mongrel

Spanish and broken English, intermingled with a smattering of Hindustani :—"Look, lady, beautiful silks from India, very nice, very good, very much." "Cheap fruit, fresh fruit, make the Don feel good." "Laundry-man, Señor, good laundry, wash white, wash stiff, never dirty any more." We took absolutely no notice of them, as we were far too busily occupied with our respective jobs. I was scared to death lest I should run down boats and agents' tugs that nipped across our bows, but as the pilot up for'ard waved an inexorable arm in whichever direction I was to steer, I left the responsibility to him, and we threaded our way through schooners, coal barges, and steamers until we cast anchor just off the Club Nautico.

Then, when the pilot heard we had come from England, he solemnly shook us each by the hand, told us the police and doctor would soon be aboard, and left in his launch, promising to come and have tea one afternoon and hear of our adventures.

The police came with great pomp. Two rotund gentlemen who looked like Field-Marshals, one with an enormously long sword which, by mistake, he left behind. They told

us to run up the international signal flag P; after that, if we were molested, we should be at liberty to shoot anyone who ventured on board, and I must say the flag proved effective, for no one attempted to come over the gangway until we asked them.

After buying some of the "cheap fruit" and telling the laundry-man to call the following morning, we tidied up, washed down decks, had a meal, and tumbled into our bunks just as we were, and slept soundly until the man came for our laundry about eight o'clock next morning.

I do not think anyone could call Las Palmas either beautiful or interesting, but there is one singular feature about it, and that is the hills at the back, all of which are formed through sand being blown over from the Sahara Desert, a distance of hundreds of miles.

The heat was intense while we were there, but we fared far better under our awning (the squaresail) than those on shore.

We had to put in several weeks while waiting for our passenger, and were rather at a loose end. We had made up our minds not to be bothered with cooking, so engaged an old Maltese named Brianco, who spoke English

and had worked in the same capacity on all sorts of vessels. He proved a blessing, as he cooked extremely well, undertook the marketing, and rowed us to and from shore. No one knows the relief we felt in having meals well prepared and nicely served, without consideration for the number of utensils and implements used. This state of bliss lasted for nearly three weeks, until Brianco failed to return one Sunday night after his "evening out." We waited for three days, then arranged to have joints cooked at a small restaurant ashore, and sent aboard. I must give the old scamp his due, and say that thirty pesetas, which my brother had given him, failing smaller change, to do the marketing with, was returned through the painter, who was beautifying the top-sides of the *Ogre*; but our chef was lost to us for ever, as he sent word that he was too ashamed to return after going on the razzle-dazzle without leave, and was afraid it might occur again.

We sometimes dined at the Club Nautico after this, but it was an expensive luxury we could not indulge in often; besides, there was a roulette table at the club which lured us to

ruin, and it was very hard not to finish up an evening by doing a splash, which invariably ended disastrously.

There is a horrible form of dysentery at Las Palmas called "Canary fever." Steve was the first to go down, as he had a weakness for that sort of thing, and he was really ill with it. I came next, and my brother last. It made us feel so weak that we decided to go to Fergus, a village in the hills. Steve would not budge. I think really he felt too limp to face the three and a half hours' shaking in a public motor omnibus, or else the roulette was too great an attraction ; anyhow, he elected to stay aboard.

My brother and I took suit-cases, and caught the motor to Fergus, arriving about six o'clock in the evening. The scenery was certainly worth seeing, as it was so unusual. The road led up through the sandhills until we came to rugged red rocks and earth, over which a winding track led to the heights in the interior of Grand Canary. Aloes and cactus were in abundance, the latter mostly covered with the cochineal beetle, which was attached to the cactus by a sort of film like a spider's web, giving the effect of a blight.

We arrived at the *fonda* about 6 p.m., to find it filled with a noisy crowd of youngsters and a few elderly people. The only vacant sleeping accommodation was a room with two small beds in it, and this led out of the *salon*, where the evening was spent in noisy games and dancing up to a late hour. No mosquito nets were provided, and I had a return of Canary fever, so next morning at seven o'clock we packed up and took our departure for Las Palmas and the *Ogre*, where quiet and solitude at least could be obtained.

We found Steve still in bed at eleven o'clock, reading and smoking. All he said when he saw us was, "What the ——? How the ——? Good Lord!"

We made rather an interesting acquaintance, a Portuguese who had assisted three Royalists to escape from prison on Madeira, where they had been sent from Portugal, owing to their political views. Having a good sea-going yacht, our friend smuggled them on board one night, and made for Las Palmas without stores, water, or ship's instruments, being afraid of attracting attention; they were all interned at Las Palmas when we arrived.

One afternoon the pilot turned up to tea, and brought with him a married son, with wife, baby, and nurse, three other men and two women (whom I never placed), and another son, who announced the fact that, being a musical professor and hearing we had a piano aboard, he had come to play to us. This he proceeded to do, displaying more energy than skill. In a tiny space like that of our saloon the din was simply stunning. Steve, who is stone deaf in one ear, owing to artillery fire during the war, shifted his position so that the defective organ should be nearest the infliction. I crept into the fo'castle to prepare tea. But my poor brother, who has a very acute ear for music, was wedged between two señoritas, who listened without flinching to the volley of sound being pounded from the keys of our poor little Broadwood. Luckily, we had had it tuned a day or two before, the tuner being a pretty little man with tiny white hands, a dear little black moustache, and a girlish smile. He came aboard very gingerly, and descended the fo'castle ladder in fear and trembling, hanging on as if the *Ogre* were rolling heavily. His exit was a sheer disaster. We were having the deck and

top-sides painted, and had told him, when coming aboard, to be careful where he placed his hands and feet. I was on deck when he left, and as he stepped from the fo'castle hatch, bowing his farewells to me, he slipped on the wet paint, and, in a sitting position, glissaded into the scuppers. Very apt was the painter's remark, when making good the damage done by the tuner: "Piano man, he all the same Señorita."

A leak in the stern of the *Ogre* had been worrying us for some days, and was at last located by my brother as being between the stern tube of the engine and the ship's timbers. So it was decided that we should have to go on the slips, which was accordingly done at some expense, but no inconvenience, as we remained aboard. It must have been during that time that a rat came to live with us. So we borrowed some traps from a friendly schooner captain, and set them all. One was like a rabbit-trap with teeth; another a big wire cage with a door that dropped when the bait was touched; and the third just an ordinary mouse-trap of the back-breaking variety. It was this last that did the trick, but it only caught the

poor beast by the nose, and it was the noise of the rat ramping round the saloon with the trap hanging to its face that woke me. I called the boys, and, after tying string round the legs of our pyjamas, we got all sorts of implements, and ran the culprit to earth against the wash-stand and behind the oatmeal barrel in the cabin, where it was beaten to death, a sight that made me feel quite sick.

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III

The passenger arrives—Visitors in mid-Atlantic—A chapter of accidents—Barbados—The lure of the "Swizzle"—St. Lucia.

We now expected our passenger to arrive at any time by the Yeoward steamer, so we had to shift our bunks; he and Steve were to occupy the cabin, and my brother and I the fo'castle. Also some dainties in the way of food had to be added to our stores. We had so hoped that, on sailing from good old England, we had left behind us all profiteering; but, alas! the farther we went the worse it became. However, our passenger had to be fed, so we determined to buy as little as possible, keeping the delicacies for him, and continuing to live on salt junk and ship's biscuits ourselves.

At last we heard the steamer would be in the following morning, but did not bargain for an advent at 7 a.m.

It was my turn to wash down decks, and I was engaged in so doing—a dingy overall being

my only garment—when a stentorian hail, "*Ogre* ahoy!" sounded from the quay. I waved an arm to indicate I had heard, and dived below to tell the boys. My brother tumbled out of bed and shot into a few clothes, telling Steve to hurry up and do likewise; but he only lay on his back blinking, and mumbling, "Let the old blighter wait—ungodly hour—respectable people—sleep again." I had to drag him out bodily, and see that he did not climb back again, while my brother rowed ashore and fetched our new shipmate.

We had a day or two in which to shake down and become better acquainted, then weighed anchor and sailed for the West Indies, the longest passage we had during the whole trip.

Almost as soon as we got outside the harbour the wind died down, and we wallowed along the coast. Dark came on and we were still close to land, so we put back a short distance to where we knew, by the chart, there was a sheltered cove at a little place called Gando. Some fishermen came off to see who we were, and we asked them to fill some kerosene tins with fresh water, which they did. It looked

such uninviting fluid that at first we hesitated to drink it, but as we wanted to nurse our water as much as possible, we did so, after boiling it and adding permanganate of potash. After two or three days tadpoles began to develop in what had not been so treated, but we had become callous to such trifles, and drank it live stock and all.

Our passenger kindly suggested taking a watch, so these were rearranged, and we had three hours each, he always taking the six to nine morning and evening. Poor old chap, two or three days out from Las Palmas he had his turn of Canary fever; but fortunately it was only a mild attack, and he stuck to his self-imposed task from six to nine o'clock most manfully. In fact, throughout the time he remained with us he was most helpful in many ways, such as splicing, carpentering, and offering helpful suggestions.

But—there is always a but—having, as a yachtsman of many years' standing, been used to short periods at sea, with an ample crew of sons or friends, he could not realise that we wanted to conserve our strength and lighten our labours as much as possible, so that a long

passage, such as the Atlantic, might not become a tedious process instead of a pleasurable experience. We were not out for a race or a week-end picnic, but knew that we had ahead of us some weeks of work that would be anything but light, considering the feather-weight description of the crew ; and as we were heavily sparred and canvassed, it was a great strain to be continually changing sails when the wind was as variable as it proved to be on our passage to the West Indies.

Another cause of contention was the food. We had told our passenger that this would be of the plainest, and he had acquiesced most cheerfully, but I suppose he did not bargain for our sketchy cooking, or the fact that it was impossible to obtain bread which would last fresh for weeks on end. He could neither bite the cabin biscuits nor masticate the salt beef we had on alternate days. So we inquired affectionately after his teeth, and he told us that he *had* a set of false ones, but as they were not comfortable he never wore them. Added to this, he confessed, after a time, that for some years he had suffered with acute indigestion. After that we did our best to compose " messes "

out of the salt junk, and soak his biscuits before meals. Also, my brother told him that if *he* would have his teeth put in proper working order at Barbados, *we* would purchase a mincing machine. As the former was never accomplished, we did not feel called upon to invest in such an expensive article as the latter.

After the *régime* of "messes" started, our passenger would take his seat at table in front of what, I own, looked a most appalling conglomeration, gaze at it long and earnestly, and invariably say, "And what is this?" At first, whoever happened to be cook at the time would explain, in the most painstaking manner, of what the ingredients consisted, and how such a delicate dish was created. But after a time our manners sadly deteriorated, and Steve, if he were the perpetrator, would blurt out, "Elephant's feet stewed in vaseline." Or my brother would stand up, give forth a text as to the ingredients, and then preach a sermon in a throaty, clerical voice upon the manner in which the delicacy was evolved. This always irritated the passenger, who set to work at once, and was usually half through his victuals before my brother had ceased.

It stands to reason that four people mewed up in a small place for months on end must have differences of opinion, and I really think we were to be congratulated on not having had more bickering than we did.

A detailed account of our passage across the Atlantic would prove but an infliction, especially as our numerous mishaps could only be explained in language understood by few of the gentler sex, for whom this account is intended.

We were much struck by the lack of life of any sort. When travelling slowly we always put out a fishing line, but ne'er a fish came to our bait. In spite of hanging a lantern in the rigging at night, flying-fish refused to come aboard to replenish our larder. No sea-birds were to be seen, with the exception of two ; one a land swallow that came aboard some thousand miles from land, stayed with us for two days, flying through one hatch and out at the other, perching on a shelf in the engine-room at night, and flying off when rested. The other was a black bird about the size of a jackdaw, with webbed feet, a fierce-looking beak, and white circles round the eyes, which gave him a weirdly sinister appearance. He was a very sick bird

when he blew aboard, alighting, after several attempts, on the rudder-head, shifting down the tiller, and crouching on the deck between the dinghy and engine-room hatch, as being the only sheltered spot. I hastened to provide him with biscuit crumbs, meat, and water, but he would have none of it. I also built him a shanty out of a packing-case and canvas. The second day he hopped on to the tiller, made his way to my hand, and so into my lap, where he crouched for warmth, for we were in for rain and squalls at that time. The following day was very rough, and in hurriedly moving about the deck we scared him so, that he was blown away to leeward and could not beat back. The last we saw of him he was lying sideways on the waves and struggling to rise.

Towards sunset one day a large school of porpoises played around us until dark ; it was impossible to count them, but there must have been hundreds. These and the two birds were the sole signs of life we encountered during our thirty-two days' passage. And of craft we saw none, for we were right out of the steamer track.

Of course, in a passage of that length we encountered all sorts of weather, and not a few

mishaps. I really think a calm is more trying than a rough sea; I mean when there is a lop or heavy swell on. When one hears of a ship encountering a stark calm, it sounds so peaceful. But in reality it means rolling incessantly, with all the sails, blocks, and, in fact, everything, banging and crashing over one's head, added to which is the knowledge that the gear is chafing far more than with a good steady breeze, and no progress is being made to counteract the waste of material.

One dark night, when Steve was on watch, my brother and I were awakened by a fearful crash. "Holy smoke! What has Steve done now?" ejaculated my brother. We nipped out of bed and on deck, to find the squaresail lying prone across the deck, with the yard resting on the bulwarks and the sail trailing in the sea on either side. Steve called out, "Something has fallen below. What is it—a teacup?" So can a deaf person, when in the dark, be deceived by sound. It was strong wire rope that had been chafed through, owing to rolling in a prolonged calm.

During one of my brother's day watches, the jibing gear smashed, and the boom came over with a fearful crash, which would have unshipped

a mast less sturdy than ours. This also was caused by the rolling we suffered during a so-called calm.

On looking at my diary, I find quite a number of calms recorded, interspersed with violent rain squalls, the latter mostly at night, and the cry "All hands on deck" was of frequent occurrence.

Another misfortune made me very unpopular for a time. We were changing the balloon foresail for the working foresail, as the weather looked nasty. My brother had hold of the halyard, and I was hooking the block to the peak of the working foresail, when a lurch caused me to stagger and nearly sprawl across the bowsprit. I let go the block, which swung back with all the force of its heavy weight and hit my brother clean on the side of the head. He crumpled up on deck ; but, on recovering, his language convinced me that he was once again master of his faculties.

Another mishap was the loss of most of our salt junk. We had noticed a peculiar odour in the fo'castle for some days, and thought the rat we had murdered must have left a wife or offspring that had starved to death. But at

last Steve ran the effluvium to earth under the floor boards. When the lid was taken off the meat bin the stench was atrocious. Poor old Steve dashed on deck, and I heard extraordinary sounds, a mixture of coughing and swearing, culminating in a thorough upheaval. Nothing would induce him to come below until I suggested that our passenger must not know about it, as some must be good underneath, and I could wash it in vinegar and Condy's Fluid. This I did, as only the joints protruding above the brine were really bad ; lower down they were tainted, and those at the bottom perfectly good. I thoroughly scoured the bin and made fresh brine, but had to do it when our passenger was occupied in the engine-room on a carpentry job, or he would not have touched a morsel, and small blame to him. I should think I threw twenty pounds overboard.

The culminating tragedy of this passage was the loss of our passenger's yachting cap. How he loved that useless piece of headgear ! And he had several little white covers to fit over it in the hot weather. It was no use in the sun, as it afforded absolutely no shade on the back of the neck, where it was most needed, and I

should think it was the hottest kind of covering for the head ever invented. Anyhow, such as it was, it went overboard in a breeze, and after that a solar topé took its place, which looked even more incongruous when worn with a vest and trousers, or merely a towel. This fatality made the fifth hat lost overboard; straw, rush, felt, all strewed the Atlantic in our wake, but none was so mourned as that cap.

On this passage, I remember that I had a most unpleasant bout of an extraordinary nature, like a chill, Canary fever, and ptomaine poisoning rolled into one. It lasted for nearly a fortnight, and had the most weird symptoms. I was in great pain, feverish at times, came out in a red rash which irritated excruciatingly, and my legs and feet swelled to a ridiculous degree. The boys used to ask me to display these limbs just to amuse them. Though feeling really ill, I was desperately hungry, for we read in our medical book that liquid nourishment alone should be taken; as there was only condensed milk on board, I had that diluted with water. This might have been sufficient if I had stayed in bed,—and the boys were very kind in wanting me to do so,—but I was determined that

the only woman on board should not be the first to be laid low. I became extraordinarily thin for such a short illness ; and when I was through the worst of it, I felt so miserably weak that it was a positive pain to have to move at all, and I had to do my work in spasms, resting between. I think the whole thing was caused through getting a chill at the tiller one night. A rain squall overtook us soon after I went on watch ; I had not time to dive below for my oilskins, and instead of calling one of the boys to take my place while I changed, I remained in my wet pyjamas until I went off watch. It was one of the hardest things to do, to have to call up one of the others out of his turn, and one felt a perfect brute doing it when necessary, for we had very broken sleep during this passage.

I mention this indisposition because it is extraordinary how helpless one feels under such conditions, fifteen hundred miles from any doctor.

Two days before we reached Barbados, my brother had a birthday. I made a parcel of one of my tins of "Three Castles" cigarettes, and, having some old stamped envelopes with

me, I steamed the stamps off, stuck them on to the packet, and addressed it in a feigned handwriting to my brother aboard the *Ogre*, mid-Atlantic. He had come to breakfast, after a disturbed night, in his pyjamas and a state of trance, and it was extremely humorous to watch him when first he caught sight of the parcel on the breakfast-table. First a sort of blank expression flashed across his face, as if he had utterly forgotten there ever had been such a thing as an early morning post ; then a look of incredulity that one could have come aboard in mid-Atlantic ; and lastly, a huge guffaw of laughter, and a cushion caught me full in the face. We ransacked our stores and had a perfect orgy of good things for supper that night, and a "sing-song" afterwards, without a murmur allowing my brother to run through his entire repertoire on the clarionet.

The following day we were much worried because Barbados ought to have been showing up, and was not doing its duty in that respect. We thought perhaps the chronometer was at fault, as it had been freshly rated at Las Palmas.

When at dawn on the following morning

nothing was visible on a clear horizon, we held a committee meeting as to the advisability of shaping our course for Trinidad, so as to have the whole of the north-west coast of South America as a buffer, if we should miss that island. Just as we had decided to follow this idea, our passenger literally capered along the deck to the engine-room hatch, where we were holding our confab, and told us he could see land on the port beam. His sixty-three-year-old eyes had, with the aid of an ancient, but beloved, pair of field-glasses, discerned what we had been anxiously looking for, but in the wrong direction ; for we discovered that we were about thirty-five miles north of our objective. So we altered our course for Barbados, hoping to make it before sunset, but the wind died down, and, as we were afraid to tackle the entrance to Carlisle Bay after dark, we steered about seven miles out to sea, and hove-to for the night. Whoever was on watch sat reading in the saloon, occasionally going on deck to see that we were not drifting unduly, for there was a strong current setting inshore marked on our chart.

We were up and doing early the next morn-

ing, and anchored in Carlisle Bay, Barbados, about 8 a.m., exactly thirty-two days after leaving Las Palmas, Canary Islands. Not a rapid run, you will say. That may be, but considering the weather we encountered, not so bad, for very often, apart from the calms, we had to run right off our course before rain squalls.

The doctor came off and gave us *pratique*. He proved to be a genial soul, and introduced us to the tennis club.

From then until the time we left we seemed to live in a whirl of gaiety. Dances, tennis parties, motor drives, and horse-races were our portion, and we fully appreciated the hospitality and kindness shown us by the white population. Seeing fresh faces after the somewhat monotonous time we had spent during our passage, with only three varieties of physiognomy to look at, was not amongst the least of our pleasures.

Barbados is a most beautiful island, and seems an ideal spot to live in; for although the town itself is extremely sultry for three months of the year, the outlying country is temperate, and almost cool after sunset. Food-

stuffs are dear, but no worse than in England The wage for unskilled labour is one shilling a day; the reason of this being, that the United States are not allowing the same influx of West Indian natives that she has in the past, and as Barbados is, for its size, the second most thickly populated place in the world, there is not enough work to go round. Our glimpse into the home life of the white population of Barbados was interesting, in that it showed us there is still one place left in the world where it is possible to have good servants, and plenty of them. A thing that struck us was, the intense loyalty to the Old Country shown by the white inhabitants. They were, at the time of our visit, threatened by the Imperial Government with being presented to the United States as part payment of war debts, an idea which very soon died a natural death when the Barbadians made it known that they would clear out, lock, stock, and barrel, if any such liberty were taken with one of Great Britain's oldest colonies.

Swizzles! How the name makes my mouth water! Those who have never drunk an iced rum swizzle have missed one of the joys of

life. I am a temperate soul as a rule, but I don't mind owning that, through all the years of a long and chequered career, I never drank so much alcohol as during my visit to the West Indies. Imagine a tumbler containing rum, syrup of limes, Angostura, soda-water and ground ice, all beaten to a froth with a swizzle stick, which is made from the stem and root of a shrub. The stem is held between the palms of the hands, and briskly rubbed; the prongs of the root create the "swizzle" effect. On leaving Barbados I was presented with a glorified edition in tortoiseshell and silver.

It was in Barbados that the men-folk had white "ducks" made by a native tailor, who seemed to think it immaterial as to who tried on the suits. While my brother was ashore one morning, the nigger thought that if he slipped the unfinished suit on Steve, it would fit my brother, who is quite another shape. The result was hardly Sackville Street, but he very cleverly mended some places worn in the shoulders of cloth clothes, caused by friction against the cabin wall, where they hung; and a hole in my tussore dust-coat was a miracle of workmanship.

We had an invitation to stay with a planter on St. Lucia, an island about eighty miles away; so, on leaving Barbados, we sailed thither, after laying in fresh hams, cheese, and a few more delicacies for our passenger.

Our friend had a charming bungalow standing on the side of a hill, overlooking Soufrière, a jolly little town nestling amongst coco-nut palms, and sheltered by lofty peaks that fell two hundred feet to the sea on either side of the bay.

One afternoon, our host took us over his plantation. He grew limes, vanilla, and cocoa, and we saw the entire process of the latter being prepared for export. To put a polish on the beans, they were placed in a huge iron cauldron with a little water; four hefty negroes crawled over the side of the receptacle, took a good hold of the beams in the roof of the low shed, and tramped bare-footed slowly and dreamily to the sound of a slow, droning noise, which they seemed to make through their noses. The polish in no way enhances the quality of the cocoa, but the wholesale buyers prefer to see it, and the beans possessing it sell at a higher price.

We went for charming walks, and one beautiful drive to some sulphur springs on the side of a mountain, which our host told us he was always expecting to boil over and inundate that side of the island. Our passenger and I had sulphur baths in a little wooden shanty erected over some springs. No towels being provided, we had to commandeer the handkerchiefs of the entire party wherewith to dry ourselves.

Each evening, on the wide verandah, we chatted and played cards to the accompaniment of the whistling frogs, whose notes were distinctly musical. They were tiny little chaps, about the size of a man's thumb-nail, and only came out at night. Another nocturnal visitor was an extraordinary old toad of huge dimensions, who squatted under one of the gas-jets on the verandah, and gobbled up the flies and moths as they fell scorched by the flame. The butterflies were of great variety, and the fireflies far more vivid than any I had seen before.

It was with regret that we took our departure after a five days' visit, and though we must have been rather an invasion, there being four of us, I think our kind host was sorry to lose

us, for he lived a lonely life, only running over to Barbados every three months or so.

After leaving St. Lucia for Colon and the Panama Canal, we had very variable winds, though plenty of it, and bowled along in fine style, our record run being 190 miles.

One day, when Steve was shooting the sun, he discovered a partial eclipse was in progress, which lasted about an hour. That same night, while our passenger was at the tiller, and I was having an after-supper cigarette on the engine-room hatch, we both saw an enormous falling star, which seemed to be minutes before it faded into space. We wondered what was the matter with the heavens.

Once more we appeared to be out in our calculations, as we could not see the South American coast where and when we expected to. However, during the morning it hove in sight, and we made towards it as fast as possible, for we were anxious to reach Colon before dark, as it is a difficult place to find at the best of times for those who have not visited that coast before.

When we were within about two miles from shore we coasted along, but could not recognise

any of the inlets and points recorded on the chart. Luckily, some native fishermen were making for land, so we overhauled them and asked where we were. They told us some outlandish spot, and that Colon was about fifty miles along the coast, so we made for it with all speed ; but it grew cloudy and dark early, so we ran out to sea about five or six miles and hove to. At intervals we saw the lights of steamers passing to and from Colon, and these told us where to make for at daylight.

IV

Arrival at Colon—From Atlantic to Pacific—Crossing the line on Christmas Day—Lost in the Galapagos Islands.

We stowed sails and entered Colon harbour on the engine. No one took the slightest notice of us, so we threaded our way between the buoys that marked the waterway, unpiloted, and chugged round and round the harbour, hoping someone in authority would come off and tell us where to moor, to save the trouble of dropping anchor; for we imagined we should go straight through the Canal after the doctor had given us *pratique*. As no one put in an appearance we anchored in a spot that suited our own ideas, and not those of the port authorities; for after having tidied up and washed down the decks, we were going to have a meal, when the Customs official and doctor came aboard, and seemed displeased that we had chosen that berth. On explaining matters to them, they let us remain there, but

said we could not proceed through the Canal that day, as the *Ogre* would have to be measured, and several formalities gone through, and if we could be ready the following morning at 5.30 o'clock, a pilot would be sent off then. In the meantime, my brother, as skipper, must go ashore in their launch and take the ship's papers to be inspected and passed. This he did.

Meanwhile the "measurer," with a negro assistant, came off to measure the *Ogre;* for the charge of going through the Canal is *pro rata* with the tonnage of the vessel. Solemnly he went round with a tape measure, the negro holding one end, and measured length, breadth, and height; then said, with a grin, "I can't make it more than twelve tons." We already knew that, for the former owner had reduced the tonnage to a minimum by calling the saloon the chart-room; as the engine-room, fo'castle, and bo'sun's locker came under the heading of "essentials to navigation," therefore were not included in tonnage charges, our "net" tonnage was much reduced. But even then, as we were ignorant of the Canal dues, it left us in suspense as to how much it would cost us to pass through.

On nearing the Canal, we held a committee meeting, unknown to our passenger, who was on watch, and had a heart-to-heart talk about the precarious state of our finances, which had been haunting us ever since leaving the West Indies.

The boys, in a light-hearted way, suggested that our passenger should be made to inadvertently fall overboard one dark night, when we could appropriate his ready money ; or another device was, that we should torture him in divers horrible manners, in order to make him write a promise of vast sums of money to be retrieved at Panama, where we knew he had a draft awaiting him. However, we came to the conclusion that he was being sufficiently tortured by having to eat the food prepared for him on board. We seriously thought of asking him for an advance on his passage money, but decided not to afterwards.

In the end we made up our minds to go through the Canal, and then, if our united funds were exhausted, we would make for the Californian coast and each find a job ; in which case we should, of course, have to confess our insolvency to the passenger, and forfeit the shekels coming to us for his transit to Tahiti.

Punctually at 5.30 a.m. the pilot came aboard, a fine-looking sturdy man of the Viking type, immaculate in white drill uniform. He seemed somewhat taken aback at the crew he had to deal with, but entered into the spirit of the thing in the most good-natured manner, and helped at the winch in raising the anchor.

We motored through the first part of the Canal, a passage about fifty yards wide, that threaded its way between mangrove swamps, with thick jungle as far as the eye could see on either side, and just before reaching Gatuan Lock we came up with two enormous steamers that had been waiting some time for us, and we entered in their rear. When the gates behind us were closed and the water allowed to rush in, we were whirled round against one of the walls, and our passenger—who was at the helm—was rudely jammed between the tiller and the side of the steering well, and there had to remain crushed until we righted ourselves. We were far too busy to show the sympathy we ought to have shown, for we were rising with the influx of the water at such a rate that our covering-board was seriously damaged. No amount of fenders and planks would serve the

purpose of warding us off, for we mounted so fast that anything of the sort was left behind. Our pilot worked manfully, shouting orders in a stentorian voice which we endeavoured to obey in a seamanlike manner. It was a most thrilling occasion. Warps snapped, fenders floated away in a swirl of foamy water, and we strove and perspired. The pilot cast off his white coat, kicked his boots down the hatchway, and pulled and hauled in a way that delighted our hearts. It was a real pleasure to see a heavy-weight aboard the *Ogre*. And he seemed to enjoy the whole affair, saying it reminded him of old times aboard a windjammer.

We emerged from Gatuan Lock into a lovely lake, surrounded by hills covered with luxuriant vegetation of all descriptions, and little wireless stations dotted at intervals. It had been a gorgeous day up to that time, but now it started to rain heavily. However, we set the sails and merrily made our way, in a series of short tacks, until the wind dropped. The pilot called for the engine, but it refused to answer the summons, and although my brother wrestled with it for nearly an hour, while we all hung over the hatch giving uncalled-for advice, it still declined to

budge. Being philosophical, the pilot suggested making fast to one of the stakes which are used on occasions for lamps, when vessels have to go through the Canal at night. So Steve dived overboard with a warp, and we tied up comfortably, all going below out of the rain, and imbibing "swizzles," until we heard a regular throb, increasing in clearness as a steamer approached us from the Panama end of the lake. The pilot asked for our megaphone, and requested the officer on the bridge to wireless for a tug to come as soon as possible, which caused my brother and me to glance at each other, the same thought occurring to both of us —more expense. Then we looked at Steve. He was leaning over the bulwarks, gazing meditatively at what appeared to be a log floating between the *Ogre* and the near bank. "I'm glad I didn't meet that chap when I made fast to the pile," he said, and I grasped the fact that it was an alligator!

My brother, in a wonderfully casual tone, asked the pilot what the cost of a tug would be to Balboa, where we intended mooring. He said it depended on time, not distance, and that $6 an hour would be the fee charged from the

time the tug left Colon until it returned there again after having deposited us at Balboa. Petrifaction of the crew ! Be it known that the English pound was then worth $3 38 cents, so we reckoned it would cost us about £2 an hour until the tug saw fit to return to its base. However, we had to get on with it, so, when the tug eventually arrived, we did all we could to hurry things along.

Once under way, we invited the skipper of the tug aboard to try a " swizzle," an invitation that was accepted with alacrity, as Panama is " dry." The tug was made fast alongside the *Ogre*, not warped ahead, so the captain just stepped over the bulwarks and boarded us. While he and the pilot discussed affairs of the Canal on the starboard side of the deck, seated in canvas chairs, we stood on the other side, a depressed trio, struggling to keep up a cheerful appearance, and take an outward interest in the wonderful construction of the Culebra Cut. It certainly was a marvellous piece of engineering, and still is, for they are incessantly at work keeping the passage clear of all débris, which is constantly falling from the hills on either side. This is the least beautiful portion of the Canal,

as it is very narrow and shut in, with little vegetation, owing to the ever-moving soil; and the dredges being constantly at work, the water is a horrible, cloudy yellow.

At length we reached a broader stretch of water, which led into Pietro Miguel Lock, called by the employees "Peter McGill." There the pilot said we should have to tie up for the night, as it was impossible to proceed farther in the dark. No sooner had we neared the quay, than he took a flying leap ashore, shouting something about, "Must return to Colon—wife waiting—dance—back again 7.30 to-morrow morning," and vanished into the dusk. Then we heard a train whistle near by, and knew he had reckoned to the minute on arriving at that lock in time to catch a return train to Colon, and so not disappoint his wife.

We were deadly hungry and very tired, for it was considerably after eight o'clock, and there seemed to have been no time or thought for a meal since lunch at about noon, so we had supper. In the middle of it we heard voices on the quay side discussing the appearance of our little vessel. Steve poked his head out of the fo'castle hatch, and, seeing three youths, asked

if they would care to come aboard and see her below decks. They proved to be three of the engineers employed in the power house, which was close by. They imbibed "swizzles" while we finished supper, and then they asked if we would care to see over the power house. Of course we cared, but said we should have to wash and change before appearing in public. This they vetoed, saying, "There ain't going to be no public," and insisting that we looked quite "picturesque" enough to go just as we were, which we accordingly did.

To comprehend, much less describe, the inner workings of a Panama Canal lock is beyond my powers. One is staggered at every turn by the immensity of it all, and the ease with which everything is done by a little man at an electric lever. A turn of his wrist, and immense engines leap to life, performing tasks of such magnitude that the mind of the beholder is left numb. In the beautifully-fitted power house at each lock, there is a perfect model of the entire Canal, and by a system of different-coloured lights, it is possible to see precisely where each vessel is that is passing through. *Ogre* was there (to our immense satisfaction)

represented by both a light in the model and a red arrow on a chart on the wall. One kindly friend gave my brother this last as a souvenir, which he greatly cherishes.

We returned to the *Ogre*, dazed by the magnitude of what we had seen, but too sleepy to talk much about it, so we turned in. I was in the act of putting out the lamp in the fo'castle before climbing into my bunk, when a head appeared through the hatch, and a wheedling voice in nasal accents said, "Say, you simply must come for a drive, there is a dandy moon, and we have an automo*bile* in attendance with a certified chauf*feur* who has just taken his ticket, and will think you are casting *as*persions on his *ma*nipulation of the wheel if you don't come right along." I sprang into my bunk and tried to look as if I were asleep, leaving further developments to my brother. He murmured something about it being after twelve o'clock, and we were due to start in the morning at 7.30, and that we were dog-tired after a long day. "Tired, are you? Then a drive in the moonlight is the very thing for the lady, and as she can't come unchaperoned, you must act in that capacity." So the argument

went on until my brother whispered to me, "D—— it, we must go, or we shall have no peace." I tried to put them off by saying I always took at least an hour to dress, if they cared to wait as long as that ; but getting into other garments seemed quite unnecessary in their opinion, so we went as we were. My brother put on a bath robe and slippers ; I tied my hair up in a scarf, and over my pyjamas slipped a dust-cloak, and on my feet an awful old pair of bathing sandals. Instead of driving into the country, as we expected, we were conveyed at top speed, and on an alarmingly zigzag course, to Panama, where we were shown the sights in the dark ; and, as a climax, taken to a cabaret that remained open all night. I flatly refused to enter in my eccentric garb, and my brother tried to back me up, but I was conveyed bodily into the doorway, and they were going to stalk right up to the stage, where fair damsels were dancing and singing, but I threatened to scream, and as they seemed afraid I really would, deposited me at a table near the door, my poor brother bringing up the rear in his conspicuous bath gown, with hair tousled from leaving a much-coveted bed in a hurry. They

must have been used to extraordinary sights in that cabaret, for the waiter who took our order never turned a hair. We returned to the *Ogre* about 2.30 a.m. and turned in until six o'clock, when we had to be up and doing, in order to have breakfast and be prepared for the pilot.

Our pilot friend of the day before did not put in an appearance. Whether he had overslept himself after an unwonted day of hard work and dancing until the early hours, or had thought better of piloting such an amateur crew, we never knew. Anyhow, at 7.30 a.m. a tiny tug took us in tow, and we entered "Peter McGill" Lock, imagining all the time what levers and buttons were being pulled and pressed by our three friends to allow of our passage. This lock, for some reason, is very much simpler to pass through than that of Gatuan, and we were soon in the farther Canal, waving farewell to one of our nocturnal comrades, who was cheering us from a sort of glorified signal-box. We proceeded to Mila Flores Lock, and there the little tug dropped us, and we were taken on by one of huge dimensions, which, to us, looked very expensive and

proved to be so, as $12 an hour was the charge we found later on.

We told the skipper of the tug that, as we meant to stay at Balboa for a week or so, we did not want to be alongside a quay amongst the cargo-boats, and constantly under the eye of a curious public ; but he had had his orders where to deposit us, and it was in the exact spot we had pictured : wedged between tramp steamers, with coal dust flying around, clanking of cranes, and continual shouting. So when my brother went to the captain of the port with the ship's papers, he asked if we could be moved to some quiet anchorage out in the stream, but within easy rowing distance of the shore. At once orders were given for a launch to tow us to a berth out of all boat traffic, and yet where we could see the craft going in and out of the Canal, which was a never-ending source of interest to us.

There we dropped anchor, realising that, though the *Ogre* was perhaps the smallest craft ever allowed through the Panama Canal, she had given far more trouble than the biggest liner afloat could possibly have done. And yet, during the entire passage we received the

utmost courtesy, help, and kindness from both those in authority as well as all concerned.

It was at Balboa that an unexpected windfall saved the situation. My brother heard from his agent in New York that the cinematograph rights of a short story had sold for a healthy sum, and on cabling for and receiving this amount, we were able to continue the cruise. Otherwise it would have come to a full-stop there and then.

Here, also, our passenger was lured from the straight and narrow way of circumspection by the insidious American ice-cream soda. If we arranged to meet somewhere ashore, he would be sure to name a soda fountain as the trysting-place ; and there, sure enough, at the appointed time he would be sitting at a marble-topped table consuming chocolate sundaes, or any other villainous concoction that took his fancy.

We made friends with a charming married couple, who frequently came aboard. The husband had been a sea-captain, and was very much interested in our trip. He told us of an island some miles off the American coast where pearling was good, and we asked him if

he could come with us and put in a month pearl-fishing. He thought it might be managed; but when inquiries were made, we learned that it was the closed season. Then he suggested that, if we wanted to make some money, we might try panning for gold in Colombia. Steve, who had done some prospecting in the dim ages of the past, was very keen on this. But that also fell through, for we heard that the Colombian coast was very bad to negotiate at that time of year; also, there was no safe harbour where the *Ogre* could lie while we should be up-country. So visions of pearl and gold faded, and we relied more than ever on our "trade goods" to see us to the end of our cruise.

The day before we sailed was a busy one. The boys attended to the fetching of the chronometer and buying large-scale charts of some of the groups of islands we meant to visit, besides getting our clearance papers, whilst I saw to the stores. We had to lay in quite a lot here, also we had to replace the meat which had been subjected to burial at sea, and get special biscuits for our passenger. Oil for the engine, both paraffin and lubri-

cating, was needed. We made two journeys in the dinghy, and on the last one our passenger, in handing the lubricating oil into the dinghy, upset it over me, and ruined my frock, petticoat, and shoes and stockings.

The next day we were up early, and with the pilot aboard at 7.30 o'clock we were taken out through the buoyed passage into Panama Bay.

We now felt that we were nearing the South Sea Islands, as we were really in the Pacific at last.

We had a fine breeze which held all day and well into the night, when it started to rain heavily. For the next week it was very wet, with gleams of sun which were insufficient to dry our saturated clothes. The skylights dripped, the hatches leaked, and we were in a constant state of dampness, added to which it became considerably colder in spite of nearing the equator. It was impossible to get a reliable sight, but we managed to keep our course fairly well by dead reckoning.

The first fine day we hung out everything on deck, and, on examining our clothes packed away below, found boots were mildewed and cloth clothes had patches of damp on them.

I don't know if damp affects foodstuffs, but shortly afterwards I discovered the hams we had bought at Barbados were simply alive with maggots. Also a large cheese, which had been rapidly increasing in flavour, became one mass of living, moving particles; very lively little things they were too, and caused me a lot of trouble in keeping them under control until I could climb on deck and consign them to the deep. The hams bred a more lethargic type of animalculæ that were easier to handle. After dealing with these I went through all our stores, and found fifty pounds of biscuits in a locker shrunk to a mass of powder. The reason of this I have never been able to fathom. It certainly was not caused by ants, for not one could be seen, and all our lockers and cupboards had been coated with a preparation that prevents that pest. Anyhow, it was no joke, for we were a good week from our next port, and only had a few pounds of biscuits left in the locker. Fortunately, we had plenty of flour aboard, so the cook had the additional duty of evolving *something* we could eat with our meat.

We crossed the line on Christmas Day, and had a perfect orgy at our evening meal. Start-

A DESCENT FROM THE "LOOK-OUT"

ing with sardines, we went through a menu of steak-and-kidney pudding, jugged hare, plum-pudding surrounded with burning brandy, and brandy sauce, potted wild duck on toast as a savoury, peaches and cream, cheese, and bananas; also some chocolates I had bought at Panama and treasured against this occasion, as dessert. Of course everything was tinned, but that was quite immaterial to us, otherwise than that it saved us no end of trouble in preparing the dishes. Our drinks were lime-squashes until dessert was on the table, then we toasted absent friends, the *Ogre*, ourselves, and, in fact, the world in general, in rum swizzles or whisky-and-soda, according to taste. I felt very sorry for my brother, whose watch it was from nine to twelve, as the unwontedly heavy meal made him feel that to turn in and sleep it off was the one and only desire of his life; but when it came to my twelve to three watch, I was far sorrier for myself.

The next day we ought to have sighted the Galapagos Islands, but a clear horizon on every side met our anxious eyes. The boys came to the conclusion that the chronometer could not have been in fault on the previous occasions

when we were out of our reckoning. The wind had dropped considerably and was light and varied, so we had a busy time adjusting sails nearly all day. Much to our joy, at sunset we saw a tiny dot on the horizon, which unmistakably developed into a good-sized island before dark. We had no fear of coming up with it during the night, as we were hardly making any way, so held on until daylight, when we saw three other islands. The thing was to know which one to make for, as only two of the group are inhabited. We intended visiting the largest, Cristobal, or Chatham Island.

It is always rather difficult to pick up one island of a group on the first visit, especially when they all have pretty much the same appearance; but in this case each island seemed identical in size, shape, height, and distance from the others. By midday we thought we had located Cristobal, but on tacking round it we missed several features marked on our chart, and discovered we were circling Santa Cruz. Now, we thought, this is all right, we can take our bearings from Santa Cruz and easily find which is Cristobal; but not a bit

of it. The wind had completely died down, so the engine was called into requisition, but once again it refused. My brother and Steve worked on it for nearly three hours without success. Meanwhile, we drifted uncontrolled, and very anxious, for strong currents are marked between some of these islands.

As darkness came on we could do nothing but keep a good look-out. After a time this was almost useless, as a heavy fog settled down, and during my brother's watch the *Ogre* drifted so close to the rocky face of an islet that it was necessary to fend her off by hand.

The fog cleared a little before dawn, as a faint breeze sprang up, but this quickly died away again, leaving us in a maze of islands.

For occupation we launched the dinghy, as the men wanted to photograph the *Ogre*, there being just sufficient air to keep her sails full enough for a picture. Afterwards they undressed for a swim, telling me to keep a good look-out for sharks. No sooner had they dived into the water than a nice little breeze came along. I gave a frenzied scream, as I should have hated to sail away without my

men-folk. They, naturally, thought I had sighted a shark, and you should have seen the record time in which they reached that dinghy, and scrambled over the gunwale, then turned to blaspheme me for crying "Wolf." When they grasped what was occurring they made good time in getting alongside the *Ogre*, and I did not need to bring her up into the wind, though this nearly happened when I left the tiller to make fast the painter thrown me. By the time they had put on sufficient clothing to climb on deck and appear before the lady of the party, the dinghy was churning through the water and banging herself against the sides of the *Ogre*.

After washing up the breakfast things, I smoked a cigarette on the engine-room hatch, whilst scanning the chart for about the fiftieth time. Suddenly I saw our position quite clearly. Everything seemed to fall into place and coincide with the chart. Why it should come as a sudden revelation, after eluding us the day before, seems a mystery.

We piled on all sail and changed our course, as we were miles out in our calculations, and we did not want another night like the last.

However, the wind died down after midday, and once more we wallowed in a stark calm. This time we could endure it with more fortitude, for we knew our position ; so we could now give our minds to the aspect of the islands, and a most extraordinary group they were. Absolute barren sterility seemed to be the chief note. They were formed of grey volcanic rock, upon which there was absolutely no vegetation. Their height lent them grandeur, but there was no fascination about them, as there is with most mountainous regions ; in fact, they had a distinctly depressing effect upon us all, for they were exactly as one would imagine a dead world to be. And I suppose that is what they really are, for the group consists of over two thousand extinct volcanoes. I believe there are still two or three active ones in the group ; and when leaving, we saw black smoke exuding in a sluggish stream from a distant peak.

All life seemed confined to the ocean, for we were entertained by some seals, which swam round us and emitted strange barking sounds. Also turtles lay sleeping on the surface of the water, and several different

specimens of sea-bird came to investigate our movements. It was easy to realise that very few vessels ever entered those waters, from the tameness exhibited by anything in or about them.

But all that did not help us to get nearer our destination, and we were very glad when a good breeze sprang up towards evening.

During the early hours of the following morning we passed Santa Fé Island, when we came in for a heavy tropical shower. After that, we sighted what we thought to be Dalrymple Rock, about two miles off the coast of Cristobal Island, standing over a hundred feet out of the sea. On nearing it, we discovered it to be swarming with seals having an early morning sun-bath. They were light grey in colour, and when Steve fetched his rifle and fired in their direction, they barked their derision and slid into the sea.

Our troubles were not over yet, for we could not find Wreck Bay, the only possible anchorage on Cristobal, until we discovered the rock we took for Dalrymple was Kicker Rock ; so on we sailed down the coast, and

round a rugged headland, and there was Dalrymple Rock with the tide racing round it. We gave it a wide berth, sailed out to sea about half a mile, and then tacked into Wreck Bay and through a passage 200 yards wide, between the end of the reef and a rocky point, and anchored off a ramshackle jetty on the farther side of the bay.

Glad as we were to have reached our destination, we did not then realise all the evils that might have befallen us; for, later on, in other groups of islands where we touched, when we told schooner captains of our experience in the Galapagos, they one and all agreed that it was a group to be avoided. It is right out of the track of vessels, and any ship being obliged to put in there anathematises the whole group, because of the tide rips that run between most of the islands, and also for the calms that frequent those latitudes. We afterwards read of a schooner which, being driven out of its course by bad weather, decided to put in at the Galapagos Islands, and was wrecked on the reef at the entrance to Wreck Bay just a month after we left.

V

New Year's Eve in the Galapagos Islands—"Old England"—Buried treasure—Enter Bill—We acquire a mascot.

After dropping anchor we awaited eventualities. Two men, who were on the beach, registered excitement, but nothing else occurred for over two hours, during which time we stowed sails and generally tidied up.

At last we saw a boat being launched from the beach, so we prepared for the usual formalities. Four men came aboard; one in a nondescript sort of uniform, who proved to be the sole representative of the police force in the whole group; another was quite a youth, the owner of the island, with his manager; and the fourth greeted my brother in English, much to our amazement. He was an old sailor who was wrecked in the Galapagos Islands over fifty years ago, and had remained there ever since, with the exception of an occasional visit to Ecuador on the island schooner. He had forgotten a good deal of his English, and in

his excitement lapsed into garrulous Spanish. With his assistance, Steve's knowledge of Spanish, and the fact that Señor ——, the owner of Cristobal, had been educated in Paris, and spoke fluent French, we all got on famously, and chatted, smoked, and drank "swizzles" until late into the afternoon, when Señor —— invited us all to his hacienda at Prospero, the settlement seven miles inland, to keep New Year's Eve.

We had quite forgotten the date, as no navigation had been necessary during the last few days.

We hastened to get into riding kit, while Señor——sent a man ashore to order four horses from Prospero for our use. These proved to be jolly little animals with Mexican saddles, and the true lope of the Indian pony, which I always think is the easiest gait. Their activity was extraordinary, for though the road, for the most part, was a mere boulder-strewn track, they never voluntarily slackened their pace, but either jumped the impediments or swerved round them. And in spite of it being uphill work all the way, they were not blown when we arrived at the hacienda.

About half-way there it started to rain heavily, and we arrived dripping, and caked with wet mud.

An extraordinary sight met our eyes as we rounded the last turn of the steep track. The hacienda, a large, picturesque, one-storied house of wood and plaster, stood on the side of a hill; round it a seething mass of peons, in every stage of intoxication, were standing, reeling, or lying. The noise was deafening, for everyone was shouting, children were banging empty meat tins, and women were singing and dancing. The flaring torches, shining through the rain, cast a lurid light on a scene that was half a nightmare, but nevertheless intensely fascinating. I was in Spain some years ago, but only in the tourist-ridden parts, where the holidays were conducted in a gay but decorous manner, and I had never seen anything like this. It fascinated me, and, as oblivious of the rain as the peasants, I sat on my horse in the midst of that brilliantly clad crowd of steaming humanity, and literally gaped. Men, sodden with a superabundance of liquid both outside and in, were waving their arms and yelling at each other with no apparent reason, or singing

at the top of their voices and waving enamel cups or glasses in the correct theatrical manner. Women were screaming and hanging round the necks of the men, or helping the fallen ones to rise. I saw one woman pick up a long thin man, who was very far gone, and sling him over her shoulder like a sack, then stalk off to one of the shanties, with his feet trailing through the mud behind her.

Señor —— brought me back to actualities by courteously suggesting I should dismount and watch proceedings from one of the windows.

A motherly housekeeper met us on the verandah, clucking with distress at our damp and draggled aspect. We went into a huge kitchen, took off our coats and hats, and steamed ourselves in front of a charcoal fire. After that Señor —— showed us his house, which was a curious mixture of bareness and luxury. Hot and cold water was laid on in the bedrooms, but there seemed no wardrobe accommodation, and a singular lack of furniture everywhere, especially easy-chairs.

We were much entertained by a small tortoise which was five years old, and seemed fairly tame ; anyhow, he knew the difference

between ourselves, as strangers, and the house party, for he "shut up shop" immediately I tried to make friends, but took absolutely no notice of Señor ——, his housekeeper, or the other servants. Some wretched fowls were tethered by one leg in the verandah, and the place teemed with dogs of every description, both friendly and otherwise, but all poor-looking and with bad eyes or eczema.

Dinner being announced, we were ushered into a long narrow room, absolutely bare of furniture except for the table and chairs. Here several men were awaiting us, standing at either side of the table. On being introduced, endless bowing and scraping ensued ; then, when places had been appointed, dead silence fell upon all ; one of those awful silences for which, I think, the hero who breaks it deserves all sorts of decorations. However, a servant, balancing four plates of soup, entered the room and promptly dropped one. That seemed to loosen all tongues at once, and from then onward we all chatted as freely as strange tongues would permit.

Señor —— placed me at the head of the table, explaining that that was the seat of honour ;

he sat on my right, and on my left a very stout, oily-looking man with enormously long thumb-nails, which he clicked together when excited.

We were thirteen at table, which I hoped passed unnoticed by my brother, and when I asked our host who all his guests were, he explained that as a rule he dined alone, but being New Year's Eve, he had invited his manager, accountant, storekeeper, etc., to dinner. I had to apologise for asking so many questions, and was very courteously told he would answer anything I liked. So I inquired why he needed a manager, accountant, and storekeeper, to which he replied that sugar was the chief product of Cristobal, and that he had a factory and over a hundred peons working in it, besides another hundred in the cane-fields. He ships them from Ecuador in his own schooner, which carries the sugar to Guayaquil, the chief seaport, and returns laden with stores—the only vessel that goes to the Galapagos Islands, it seems. The peons earn four pesetas a day, and are a lazy, insubordinate lot. In fact, they murdered the present owner's father about three years ago, as he had thrashed two men for disobedience.

The dinner proved a long affair, and I have not the vaguest notion what we ate. We were asked if we would like coffee, and on intimating that we would, a tumbler and small glass-stoppered bottle—like that used at home for oil or vinegar—were placed in front of each. Not knowing what to do, I poured nearly all into the tumbler, and drank it in gulps, trying to retain a normal expression ; but it was cold, and frightfully strong. I found afterwards that I ought to have waited for hot water, which was passed round, and added about an eggcup-full of the coffee, which was a strong essence. Steve noticed my suffering, and I could see he was inwardly chortling.

After dinner we adjourned to a sort of ante-room, where we smoked and chatted, or, rather, shouted, as the orgy going on outside seemed more boisterous than ever. Our host told us it would continue until daylight, and that no work at the factory would be possible on the following day.

About 9.30 o'clock we started on our journey back to the *Ogre*. The rain had fortunately ceased, but the track was in a terrible condition. However, our little steeds seemed well used to

it, and we found it safer in the dark to let them have their heads and pick their way as they pleased. Our passenger thought this reckless, and continued to "nurse" his mount, as he called it, with the result that he lagged behind considerably, and we had constantly to wait for him.

While on Cristobal, we arranged to have meals ashore, in order to save cooking, but we had to provide our own crockery, plate, and cutlery. The policeman, who lived right on the beach, very kindly offered us the use of a room, and the wife of the lighthouse-keeper catered for us. Her husband was absent in Ecuador, and she had to attend to the so-called light-house, which consisted of an oil lamp on a slight scaffolding, about twenty feet high. Sometimes this was lighted at sunset, but as often as not it was forgotten.

The old Englishman warned us not to go ashore with bare feet, as the sand bred an insect which he called a "jigger," and it had an uncomfortable way of entering the skin and burying itself in the flesh of the foot. In spite of taking "Old England's" warning to heart, we attracted those affectionate little animals;

Steve had one imbedded in the quick of his big toe-nail, and suffered a good deal through it. After we had been at sea some days, I discovered one in the sole of my foot, and had to cut it out. It had been painful for some days, but I imagined it was a scratch made by coral, or something of that sort.

"Old England" loved to come aboard and talk to us, and my brother gave him several jobs to do. He was born on Tower Hill, and went to sea at fifteen years old. He was delighted with some books we gave him, and presented us with some in return, a curious assortment of Nat Gould, Charlotte Brontë, and Jules Verne; they were yellow with age, and thumbed with much reading. He knew very little about the war, and seemed to be under the impression that Holland was our chief adversary. He enlightened us as to how the island was managed. It seems that the four pesetas a day earned by the peons was a fantasy. They are lured from Ecuador by the promise of that wage and a free passage to the Galapagos Islands. When they and their families arrive there, they find that it costs them that sum to live, for the only store on the island is

owned by Señor ——, who charges what he likes for goods supplied, and receives his own money back again. The wretched peons never earn enough to pay their return passage to Ecuador, and there they remain ; so one cannot blame them for celebrating on New Year's Eve when liquor is free and abundant.

On telling "Old England" of our abandoned idea of gold-washing in Colombia, he informed us that there was buried treasure in the Galapagos Islands, left there by pirates from the South American coast, who used the islands as a cache. He offered to take us to the spot. When asked why he had not run the treasure to earth himself long ago, he told us the difficulty was to reach the island, which was a considerable distance away, with no boat in which to make the passage. Many years ago he had started building a cutter himself, with that object ; but while steaming the planks on to the ribs, one of them gave way where nailed, sprang back, and hit him in the chest, knocking him twelve yards away ; this he took as a warning that the treasure was not for him.

Another man had also been in search of it, but "Old England" had never heard the result,

as the man failed to return to Cristobal, and the chances were he had discovered and taken it away elsewhere. But "Old England" seemed to think it worth while having a try, as we possessed such a fine craft, at which our hearts swelled with pride in the *Ogre*.

When it came to discussing details, however, there appeared to be difficulties in the way, for the old man thoroughly understood the anxious time we had spent in approaching Cristobal, and said a sailing craft without a powerful engine stood a chance of spending months in making the "treasure island" owing to calms and currents, or, indeed, of being driven ashore and wrecked. As we did not want to pile up the *Ogre* just as we had started the really interesting part of our cruise, and knowing that if we hung about more than a week or two we should come in for the rainy season in that part of the Pacific, we abandoned the idea with many regrets.

Señor —— sent horses each day to the bay where the *Ogre* was lying, in case we cared to ride up to the hacienda to lunch, an offer one or other of us often availed himself of.

One day he took us for a most gorgeous ride in the interior of the island. From what

we saw when becalmed amongst this group of islands, we were quite unprepared for the lovely scenery inland. After a steep climb up a rough track, over a series of ridges, and round the shoulder of a mountain, we pulled up, and instinctively gasped at the scenery lying below us. A most gorgeous valley lay at our feet, the surrounding peaks forming a cup. There were little undulating hills with cattle and goats grazing upon the greenest of grass ; fields of sugar-cane, groves of oranges and limes, and plantations of coffee, all growing in a rich red soil. Banana plants, dotted here and there, reminded us we were in the tropics, otherwise we could have imagined ourselves in the Scottish Highlands, both as to scenery and climate ; for at the height we then were it was literally cold, and to add to the illusion, a fine mist began to fall, which increased as the afternoon drew on, so that only immediate objects were visible.

As usual, our passenger lagged behind, and at last we really lost him, or, rather, he lost us, owing to the density of the mist. Poor old chap ! He was quite upset when he joined us, after being searched and shouted for by the

whole party. He told us that, when he called and received no answer, he thought it best to take our advice and let his pony have his head ; but on doing so, the little beast merely stood still. Señor —— found him at length, and we all returned to the hacienda and had hot coffee.

As we were sailing two days later, I asked Señor —— if we might buy a few things at his store, and was very relieved when he turned me over to the storekeeper, who treated me in quite a businesslike manner. I was half afraid the goods would be sent aboard as a gift, for some Spaniards are so embarrassingly polite.

To my horror, the storekeeper told me he had no biscuits of any sort in stock. The island had run out of both them and flour, as the schooner was three months overdue for some unknown reason. No cheese, no bacon or ham. It was really tragic. However, my brother asked "Old England's" wife—a dear old Ecuadorian woman, nearly stone deaf—to bake as many loaves as she could from our supply of flour. She did so, but as there was no yeast and the flour had weevils in it, the result was both depressed and depressing. Still, we were thankful to eat it and so save our small store

of ship's biscuits, which I divided into separate portions in order that each could consume his own as he pleased. Happily this did not affect our passenger, as he had special biscuits laid in at Panama. The night before our departure we invited Señor ——, the policeman, accountant, storekeeper, etc., to dinner, and had a noisy evening. One of our guests took Steve aside, as being the only one who could speak Spanish, and talked excitedly and at great length. The sum total being that he was desirous of leaving the Galapagos Islands as soon as possible, and would we take him along with us in any capacity whatsoever? It appears that the Ecuadorian Government had found out that he—the Comisario—had been issuing illegal spirit licences to the peons, and when the island schooner returned, he was expecting to be haled to Ecuador and prison.

What a horrible position to find himself in! To be free, and yet know that prison inevitable awaited him.

We pointed out that there was no accommodation for an addition to our number, and it would mean sleeping on the saloon cushions; he said he would be delighted to do so, or

even on deck, if only we would take him. We told him that as cook he would have to do all the cleaning and dirty jobs, was sure to suffer from sea-sickness, also that he would spoil his beautiful clothes, to say nothing of ruining his hands. (For he was a great dandy, and each time we had met him on shore he seemed to have a different suit on, his socks and ties being of the most varied colours.) But nothing mattered to him except getting free of the island before the schooner arrived; so there and then it was all arranged that we should convey him to Australia, giving him board in return for his work as cook and steward; and he left to pack up his belongings.

The following morning, a boat laden almost to the gunwale came off to us. Señor ——, the Comisario, "Old England," and two peons were the human freight; bananas, limes, oranges, sweet potatoes, marrows, and some meat salted by "Old England" were the cargo. All but the last were gifts from our kind host. Added to this, he had brought the tortoise as a mascot.

Our farewell to "Old England" was really quite touching. He wept, and said it was the

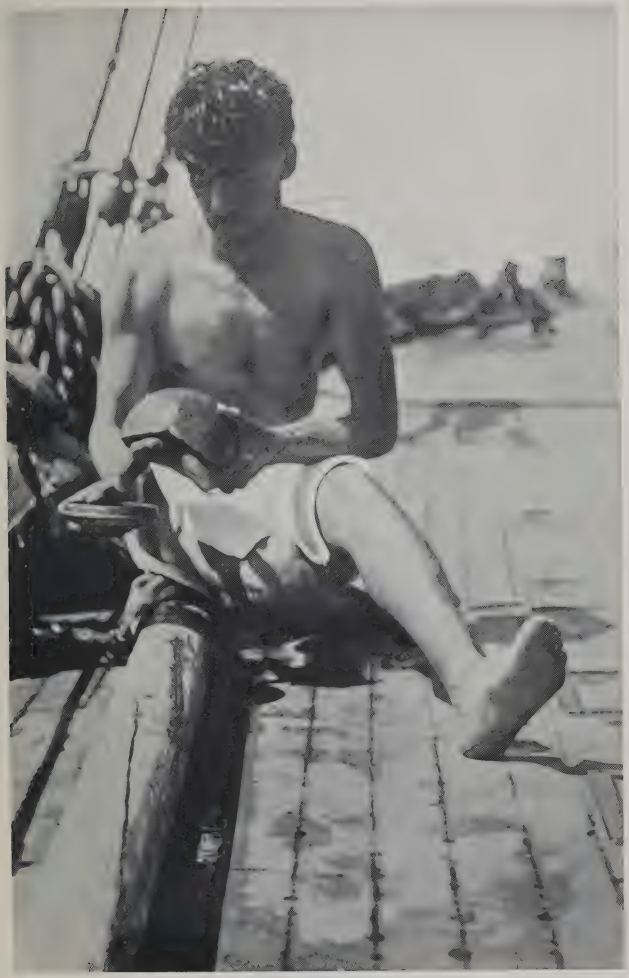
last time he would ever have the chance of speaking to his own countrymen. My brother offered to take him with us if he cared to come, but no, he would not leave his old woman, and she wouldn't be happy in a white man's country, and he would die where he had lived most of his life.

Señor —— presented us with an autograph photo of himself, which was a libel, and after much hand-shaking and flourishing of hats they went ashore, and we proceeded with the business of stowing our new cargo and getting under way.

The new addition to our party, whose Christian name was Guillerma (Bill for short) went below and unpacked, after which he came on deck very anxious to help, but as it took too long to explain by gesture what was needed to be done, I am afraid he must have thought us somewhat terse of manner, for he seated himself sadly on the engine-room hatch and lighted a cigarette. He was a most charming young man, with manners and appearance that would have captivated anyone, but he was strictly ornamental, which was not the type best suited to that of "cook and bottle-washer" on board

the *Ogre*. It fell to my lot to initiate him into his duties, and as I could not speak his language, I had to demonstrate everything, at which he smiled with great charm, and ejaculated "Si, si," then proceeded to light more cigarettes and lean against the fo'castle table. Of course it is difficult for a mere man to take up unaccustomed domestic duties, and I quite realised that, but his nonchalant way of watching me sweep out the cabin and saloon made me want to smack him. However, he fell into line after a few days of home- and sea-sickness, and really *was* a help in the cooking, as he used to serve most appetising dishes made out of the beef "Old England" had salted; but he used a quart bottle of olive oil in about four days, that had cost us nearly $3 in the West Indies, then started on the butter.

The tortoise, whom we had named Algernon (Algie for short), proved an endless source of amusement, to me at any rate. My brother was mildly amused with him, but I think Steve actively hated him, and I could never see why, for what can be more inoffensive than a tortoise? He was in a very grubby state when he first came aboard, so I gave him a good



"BILL" AND "ALGIE"

scrubbing with soap and the brush used for the potatoes (we never peeled them), then I polished him with brown "Nugget" until he shone resplendently. He resented this treatment very much, and did all the hissing that is deemed necessary to grooming. I rigged up a little shanty to protect him from the weather by stretching a piece of canvas from our emergency water cask to the bulwarks, and made a bed of frayed rope. His enamel water basin was near this, and as I always fed him there, he soon came to know that was his own little kingdom. At first he would shrink into his shell at any sudden noise or movement, but in time took no notice, and became used to us all, wandering about quite happily. Sometimes he would eat and drink prodigiously, and at others would go for a long while without anything, which was a good thing, for days before we reached the Marquesas Islands we had run out of fresh vegetables, bananas, etc. On one occasion I offered him a tiny flying-fish, which had come aboard, and to my amazement he gobbled it up. But after a little while he stumped aft to the steering well, where I was doing my "trick," stood for a moment looking

at me, opened his mouth wide and was very sick, then turned his back on me and stumped away again. Poor wee thing! That was his only method of warning me for the future. He loved to bury himself under the spare sails if they were lying on deck, and often we would miss him for a day or two at a time, but generally when it became dark he went of his own accord to his shanty, and snuggled into the frayed rope.

Once he was missing for three days and nights, and we thought he must have fallen overboard, but on washing down the decks one evening, I saw him under the bowsprit. We had tightened the jib purchase, and Algie, who had crept under the bowsprit for shade, was wedged between it and the deck. It just shows how strong the shell of a tortoise must be to stand such a strain. He seemed quite unharmed, and on being released, made straight for his particular portion of the deck, to find his house and water basin gone, poor old chap! I hastened to replace them, and gave him some sweet potato over from lunch, which he ate with appetite.

VI

Bill is not a success—Arrival at Nuku Hiva, Marquesas Islands—Entertained by the natives—A fruitless venture—We treat the Paumotos with respect.

Nuku Hiva, in the Marquesas Islands, was our next port, and we set our course accordingly; but do you think we could get away from the Galapagos Islands? Not a bit of it. For four days we alternately sailed and drifted, according to wind and currents, before we got out of sight of the group. Then we struck the south-east Trades and made good runs each day, the wind dying towards sunset.

As before, we had several mishaps, which usually occurred during the night, for it was impossible, after dark, to keep an eye on the things that were likely to chafe. Our topsail halyard gave way one night during my brother's watch, and "all hands" were needed. I was sent below for some whipping twine, and felt injured when I saw our passenger in his bunk, lying on his back with his mouth wide open,

snoring comfortably in spite of the pandemonium on deck.

Another night the peak halyards gave, and we continued with only the squaresail until daylight.

On another occasion the topsail yard split right through, and it was with great difficulty we were able to haul it down, as it caught in everything in its descent. Our sails, too, those of the lighter canvas, began to wear, and I was kept pretty busy patching them. Sometimes a rent made in half a minute would take me three or four hours to repair, for I was no adept with the palm.

Poor Bill was not at all happy, though he tried to bear up under his tribulations. He frequently cried if spoken to hastily. I asked Steve to remind him that, though the work was unpleasant it was not hard, and that anyhow he was being carried farther and farther from the cold, cruel walls of a prison cell, etc. Steve told me not to be a silly ass ; nevertheless, when he did say something of the sort to Bill later, he only whimpered, and said he was also being taken farther and farther from his wife and four children. It was the first

we had heard of them, and rather late in the day for him to regret having deserted them. In fact, at times, relations became distinctly strained, as eventually we tired of his continual whining; he and Steve used to growl at each other a good deal. I was sometimes afraid Steve might receive a knife in his back, for Bill looked very theatrical when angry.

It doesn't take much to upset the average man and woman when cooped together in a small space for any length of time, under which circumstances little things irritate to an extraordinary degree, which at normal times would be passed over as not worth squabbling about. For instance, Bill *would* pour vinegar over his eggs and rice, and Steve said it made him feel sick. In a flash Bill replied that seeing us all covering bananas with sugar and cream also nauseated *him*. Our passenger's chief grievance against Bill was, that "the silly fellow didn't pick up English." And he used to touch different things on the table, and tell Bill the English for each. Instead of repeating them, as our passenger intended, Bill used to smile sweetly and mention the Spanish equivalent, which did not interest our passenger at all.

It was Bill who first sighted the Marquesas Islands just twenty-five days after leaving the Galapagos group, and he was hugely delighted at this achievement.

As it was nearing sunset, we slowed down as much as possible, and not until 3.30 p.m. the following day did we cast anchor in Tia-o-hae Harbour, Nuku Hiva, for we had to find our island, and coast along it to an anchorage. We thoroughly enjoyed this, as the wind was favourable, and, there being no barrier reef, we were able to sail straight into the harbour without the anxiety of finding a passage; so we gave our attention to the general appearance of Nuku Hiva.

The Marquesas Islands belong to France, and are extraordinarily beautiful, being mountainous of aspect, and covered with luxurious vegetation. The peaks, in some cases, rise to 3000 feet, with verdant valleys intersecting them. Some of these heights run sheer down into the vivid blue sea, which churns into white crests as it dashes against their bases.

A trading schooner lay at anchor in the bay, and as we chugged in on our little engine, we saw a French flag flying from one of her masts.

But a very English voice hailed us, asking where we came from. When we shouted in chorus "England," we heard, "Well, I'm darned!" Then a boat was lowered, and the captain came aboard almost before we had dropped anchor. He told us he came from Liverpool originally, but had become a naturalised Frenchman, as no English skipper was allowed in command of a French schooner. . . . He had married a French wife, who lived in Tahiti, his headquarters.

He was much interested in our trip, and congratulated us on having come so far in "this little eggshell."

Being a genial soul, he asked if we would accompany him ashore to dinner at the Compagnie Navale; we were glad to accept, and spent a very jolly evening among six or seven jovial French traders and storekeepers, who had divers strange instruments to which we all sang.

Bill was in his element, as one of the men spoke Spanish. Also we heard there was a priest at the Catholic Mission along the coast who spoke the language fluently, so poor Bill began to revive.

The next day my brother, the passenger, and

I went for a stroll, and met this same priest, who very courteously recommended to us a native woman who would undertake our laundry. He then took us to the Mission, and introduced us to an aged *religieuse*, who was one of the original missionaries sent to the Marquesas, and she had witnessed more than one of the cannibal feasts of the old Marquesans. She was considerably over eighty years old, and crippled with rheumatism. She did the honours of her little house with quiet dignity, and we sat round a table with a blue-and-white check cloth, and drank sour red wine, trying to look as if we enjoyed it. She showed my brother her swollen hands and knotted fingers; he, not knowing what to do, and being no French scholar, just held the poor hands and stroked them, murmuring, "Pauvre petite."

Besides the Catholic Mission, there are Seventh Day Adventists on Nuku Hiva, a worthy American couple, who entertained us to dinner one evening. Their beliefs are no doubt well known, but as we ourselves were not acquainted with them, it interested us to hear that they were gaining many converts,

though we were told afterwards that this was largely due to the fact that they keep the Sabbath on Saturday, thereby furnishing the chronically indolent native with two "days of rest" in the week.

The lady missionary went with me for a long walk, and proved a most interesting companion, as she knew all the birds, trees, and flowers. She also took me into several of the native houses, and at each I was given fruit and flowers.

The Marquesans are rapidly dying out, owing to consumption, an epidemic of small-pox introduced by a trading schooner a few years ago, and that terrible scourge pneumonic influenza, which has recently taken such heavy toll all the world over. They are a fine-looking race, and seem happy and good-natured, although the missionaries said they realise this terrible tragedy overhanging them, which is perhaps the reason of their laziness ; having no future in store, they may not think it worth while to work, but simply wish to enjoy themselves to the best of their abilities while life lasts.

All the remains of old habitations show that

they were erected on platforms, made by piling volcanic rocks upon each other, with no signs of cement or other adhesive matter. How the floors of the platforms were made as smooth as they are it is difficult to say, because the rock is intensely hard. Modern houses are of the usual little wooden kind with two rooms and a small verandah.

One evening a number of native men came aboard to sing and dance for us. Each brought a wreath of frangipanni, and solemnly presented it to one or other of us; so there we sat, looking perfect idiots, hung with wreaths of flowers, on one side of the deck, while the natives squatted on the other in two rows, facing each other.

We mixed them some rum-and-water, and handed it round in tumblers, which were minutely inspected and much admired. Then they commenced a sort of monotonous drone accompanied by the swaying of their bodies. This went on for so long that the schooner captain and storekeeper, who were also our guests, said the performers needed warming up. So Steve and my brother dived below, and mixed a concoction of rum, pepper, and Worcester sauce, which had instant effect, and

they started to shout and clap their hands and slap each other on the back. At last they settled down to business, and we had a really fine exhibition of their pantomimic talents.

Of course it all meant something, though to us it appeared to be merely a pleasant sound accompanied by grotesque gestures, which was just as well, according to our white guests' verdict.

They finished their performance with a sketch illustrating our life aboard the *Ogre*, and it was quite easy to follow the meaning of their movements, and recognise ourselves as the "Capitani," "Matey," and "Vahine." They pulled on imaginary ropes, staggered about the deck as if in a rough sea, and went through extremely realistic contortions representing sea-sickness.

We distributed little gifts from our trade goods amongst them, and they went ashore as happy as children. But we stayed up very late chatting on deck. The Franco-British captain gave me a large yellow pearl of beautiful lustre as a parting gift; he was sailing the next morning for Tahiti, where we hoped to meet him again.

We heard, through the manager of the Compagnie Navale, that an island ninety miles away had a pearl bank with some fine oyster-shell, which a German firm had intended exploiting if war had not intervened. We asked for particulars about diving, etc., and the manager offered to lend us his cook, who was a Paumotan diver and spoke a little English, also the loan of a water-glass.

For those who have never seen or heard of a water-glass, I must explain that it is a square box made of wood, one end being fitted with glass and the other open. Sufficient water to cover the glass is poured inside, then the box is partially submerged, and through the opening one can see with extraordinary clearness to a great depth beneath the surface of the sea.

So Pascall, a huge, grinning mass of bronze manhood, was added to our extraordinary *ménage*, and slept on deck one side of the fo'castle hatch, wrapped in a frowsy blanket—his own property. He was also the proud possessor of a cooking stove made out of a kerosene tin with a hole cut in the side; on this he did all our cooking while he remained

with us, thus relieving Bill of a good deal of work, which exactly suited him.

We left Nuku Hiva at 3.30 one afternoon, reaching Hiva Oa the following morning, where we anchored in Traitor's Bay, a sheltered inlet where two other vessels were lying.

Although a far smaller island than Nuku Hiva, it is the present seat of Government, and the Administrator, a charming Frenchman speaking good English, came aboard to see our ship's papers, and at once asked us to dine with him the following night. My brother and I did so, and spent a most pleasant evening. Mrs. Administrator, a pretty, vivacious brunette, could not speak a word of English, but her husband helped us out when she and I got into difficulties. At parting she gave me a really beautiful necklace of white, gold, and orange shells from the Paumotas.

One day I took my lunch ashore to explore one of the numerous lovely valleys which ran inland. I was well repaid for the long and somewhat tiring walk that ended in a scramble up the side of a mountain, when I saw the view of the sea through the trees from that height. I forgot the heat and mosquito bites I had

suffered in reaching my goal, and sat for over an hour smoking and cooling off, feeling absolutely alone and out of the world, a sensation I love—if not too protracted.

Owing to the height of the surrounding mountains, the sun was well out of sight as I started on my downward journey, and I was afraid it would be dark before I could strike the path by which I had come. In my hurry I lost my bearings, and could not find a little stream I had followed during my ascent. Knowing that if I persisted in going downhill I must eventually come out near the sea, I continued my way, but it was hard work breaking through the thick undergrowth, and the mosquitoes were a perfect pest.

At last I came to a clearing where some native men and women were collecting cocoanuts, and packing them into panniers lashed each side of skinny ponies. They looked startled at my sudden appearance, but soon grinned, and one by one came and shook hands. Two of them spoke a few words of English, and asked if I were the "Vahine" who had come from "Beritania" in a little boat; on hearing I was that august person,

they all shook hands again. Their day's work seemed over, so I went with them to a group of huts, in front of which children and dogs were tumbling over each other, and from there two women put me on the right track for a village, where more hand-shaking and grinning took place. One man picked up a fowl that happened to be stalking near by, and thrust its legs into my hand ; in that manner I had to carry the wretched bird, head downwards, squawking most of the way, back to the *Ogre*, where Pascall decapitated it, and we had it for supper.

One disadvantage of the Marquesas is the insects. Mosquitoes are numerous, but they do at least give a warning buzz before settling on the portion of one's anatomy chosen by them. But the sand-flies are quite another matter ; they are tiny insects, scarcely visible, and very silent. Our poor passenger went for a stroll in low shoes one day, and for weeks after his feet and ankles were swathed in boracic lint, for the irritation was so intense that he could not refrain from scratching the bites. Any abrasion of the skin in that climate easily festers, and he had a bad time of it. We

all had to be very careful to put iodine on a wound directly it occurred ; months after the occasion on which I felled my brother with the foresail block, he had an unhealed wound on his elbow, where it came in contact with the deck in falling.

The day before we sailed for the pearl bank, we asked Pascall to purchase coco-nuts, bananas, and any other fruit he could get. He went ashore in the morning in quest of these things, and returned with a perfect retinue of natives carrying enough to sink the *Ogre*, which he proudly told us he had procured for "no money." He must have been a very popular gentleman in Hiva Oa, because he brought aboard two live fowls which also cost "no money." Each of the poor things was tied by a leg to the stanchions of the bulwarks, and had a most unhappy time until it went into the pot.

A rabbit, given to me by a kind little French-woman, was more comfortably housed, as Pascall made a hutch for it out of a packing-case ; Algie took a fiendish delight in thrusting his ugly face between the wooden bars, and nearly paralysing the poor rabbit with fright.

We left in the afternoon, and soon arrived at Tahu Ata, which was in sight. As it was still daylight, all but our passenger, whose lint-swathed feet and ankles prevented him from walking, went ashore for a stroll. It was quite a risky business jumping from the dinghy on to the rocks at the only possible landing-place. There was a big swell on, and one at a time we had to take a chance and spring at the psychological moment. Bill was the only one who came to grief, and after having donned white drills and canvas shoes, it was a tragedy that he should be the one to get a ducking.

Some natives from the village on the beach came to meet us, and Pascall made it known who we were and what we wanted. He took us to what he said was "Government House," a good-sized wooden structure with wide verandah, but it proved to be only a store. Here we asked for tea, and after waiting for about twenty minutes, it arrived, with some rather nice little flat cakes.

The entire village followed us, and squatted beyond the verandah watching us with the liveliest interest. Meanwhile Pascall told us he would require someone to assist in diving

for shell, and, on his advice, we engaged a very ancient specimen of Marquesan, who asked a prohibitive wage. So we beat him down, and eventually engaged him; that night Pascall had a neighbour on the other side of the fo'castle hatch.

Directly after breakfast the next morning, the two boys, with Pascall, his friend, and the water-glass, rowed away in the dinghy, and disappeared behind the headland. I would like to have accompanied them, but the boys thought bronze birthday suits might prove embarrassing, so I waited in a perfect dither of excitement.

When they returned, and were still some distance from our gangway, I shouted inquiries as to the result of their investigations. Dead silence ensued. Then they came nearer, and I could see thunder sitting upon the brow of Steve, and disgust literally oozing from my brother. As soon as all were on deck, my brother said, "Now, Pascall, pack up your bundle and get off this ship, and tell your mate to do the same." Pascall gazed blankly at him, but, with the unquestioning obedience natives usually show to the voice of authority, he

meekly proceeded to do so. Meanwhile Steve hailed a canoe that was just making for the shore with a catch of fish. It came alongside, my brother paid the men, and they were being paddled towards land with their goods and chattels — not forgetting the kerosene tin stove—before they realised what had happened.

When I asked for an explanation, my brother said, "The greasy old beast wouldn't dive, afraid of sharks ; let's get under way."

Things were too tense at the moment to ask for further information, but after we were clear of all reefs and on our course to the Paumoto Islands, the boys explained that there certainly was shell, and big ones too, but in no great quantity. They wanted Pascall to dive in order to ascertain the quality, but he refused, saying that Paumotan divers always went down in couples for fear of sharks being about. The other native seemed quite a useless appendage. Arguments failed, so in wrath they returned to the *Ogre*. Pascall evidently thought he was out for a joy ride, with rations and a substantial wage thrown in. We thought otherwise, so swallowed our disappointment and set sail for the Paumotos, or Taumotos as the

natives of that group prefer it to be called, as the former appellation means "cowardly."

This is a widespread group of low-lying atolls, and bears a very bad name for navigators. Some of the islands only rise three or four feet out of the sea, and can scarcely be seen at a distance of ten miles even on a clear day; in spite of this, for some reason, the steady south-east trade wind seems to be broken up, and drops into light varying breezes with prolonged calms.

After our experience amongst the Galapagos Islands we meant to be very careful, so chose the most easterly island, Rahira, as our objective, in order to keep well on the rim of the group.

We experienced every kind of wind and weather during our six days' passage from the Marquesas Islands. First calms, then one rain squall after another, and one severe thunderstorm, with the wickedest lightning I have ever seen; the wind was from every quarter during two days and nights, then more calms, until one morning at 5.30 o'clock Steve, who was on watch, called us, as daylight discovered several palm-clad strips of land on the horizon.

The same difficulty of identifying Rahira

STEVE AND SELF *TÊTE-À-TÊTE*

ensued that had been our portion when locating Cristobal in the Galapagos, for all the islands looked equally east. But when the light became stronger we could see, by the size, which was the one to make for. What wind there was happened to be favourable, but as we neared Rahira, it died completely away, and the heat was intense. My brother started up the engine and we coasted along the south-west side of the island looking for Avatoru Passage. Once we really thought we had found it, when we saw a break in the foam dashing over the reef; our passenger, who had become very irritable with the heat, suggested "having a smack at it"; but fortunately we did not, for we heard eventually that more than one vessel had come to grief there, the passage only being suitable for small boats.

Hot and discouraged, we continued to coast until 6.30 in the evening, when we decided to give it up, much as it went against the grain. We were afraid of lying off during the night, and having another "smack at it" on the morrow, because we found a strong current setting towards the island. So we changed our course for the Society Islands, and took our last look at the first atoll any of us had ever seen.

Perhaps it will be as well to explain to those who do not know, the difference between an atoll and a coral island. Both are formed, originally, by the coral polyp. An atoll is a ring of coral made by this insect ; rising above sea level, and coming in contact with the air, it is unable to continue its work. Enclosed in the coral ring is a lagoon like tea in a teacup, the rim of which represents the atoll.

A coral island, as usually understood, is formed of upheaved coral, made like an atoll in the first instance, and then, by some subterranean or volcanic action, heaved above the surface of the sea to varying heights.

As the natural soil of both these types of island is simply coral dust or sand, it is easy to understand that little vegetation grows but the coco-nut palm, which seems to flourish therein. These probably originate in coco-nuts having drifted from other islands ; branches, leaves, and such-like flotsam may be washed up and decay, and in time form a thin layer of soil in which birds inadvertently drop seeds of grass and other small herbs.

Volcanic islands, on the other hand, as a rule are very prolific in producing vegetation, for lava dust is one of the most fruitful soils.

VII

Tahiti—The land of the "Lizard Men"—Exit Bill; enter Ray—Arrival at Palmerston.

It was about this time that we discovered we had cockroaches aboard, and we imagined they had been introduced in the bananas taken on at Hiva Oa. They increased with amazing rapidity, and seemed to find their way into closed tins and boxes in the most extraordinary manner. The only thing we could do was to slay each as we found it, for we knew of no remedy.

I introduced Algie below, hoping he might help, as I have heard that black-beetles will never remain where a tortoise is, and thought cockroaches might share the same aversion, but they appeared to be the best of friends. Steve, who had laughed at my attempt, merely said, "Silly rotten idea, I told you Algie would prove a wash-out; he might just as well be pitched overboard."

After leaving the Paumotos, Bill began to

make inquiries as to the prospect of finding a position of some sort at Tahiti, the largest of the Society Islands, and the one we intended visiting first. We knew that meant he was thoroughly fed up with his work and us. My brother told him he could do as he pleased; if he found a job at Tahiti before we left, he was at liberty to remain there, but, on the other hand, if there was nothing to suit him, he could continue aboard as far as Australia. After this he became far more cheerful, for he saw release from his uncongenial tasks in the near future. In fact, it was only two days later that we saw Tahiti at daybreak, and reached Papieté, the chief town, when the sun was setting behind the island of Murea a few miles away, the most gorgeous spectacle I have ever seen.

My brother and I had touched at Papieté in 1914, two days after the *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* had bombarded the poor little town, and the Germans had tried to land, in order to procure the 2000 tons of coal lying on the wharf, which the French set on fire to prevent the enemy making use of it. On that occasion the town was practically in ruins, and the

natives were returning from the hills, where they had taken refuge, with all their household goods on their backs.

In 1920 it presented a very different aspect as the pilot took us to a snug berth just off the Esplanade, where we cast anchor stern-on to the land, and stretched two warps to bollards on shore.

The Society Islands belong to France, and are so called because the Royal Society sent a scientific expedition, under the command of Captain Cook, in 1769, to observe the transit of Venus over the sun's disk.

Tahiti is by far the largest island in the group, and Papieté, its capital, is a busy little metropolis, being one of the chief ports of the Eastern Pacific.

There is quite a large white population, mostly French and English. The natives, who are still a fine, handsome race, in spite of ill-living, lost nearly one-third of their number during the influenza epidemic of 1918. Of Chinamen there is a large colony, for the French Government, finding the Tahitians too lazy to work, sent to China for emigrants. Those sent were not of the coolie class, how-

ever, and now the Government finds itself landed with Chinese merchants and storekeepers who undersell the French firms, and consequently do a roaring trade.

That first evening we went ashore with the pilot, who dined with us at the "Diadem Hotel," and incidentally promised us a receipt for getting rid of the cockroaches aboard the *Ogre*.

Our passenger opened up like a flower at finding himself once more in civilisation, and within reach of steamers that would convey him comfortably to Vancouver, where he proposed joining a daughter, who was married and settled there. Poor old man! I think he was genuinely glad to say farewell to the *Ogre* and all her discomforts, and once more adopt a more normal existence suited to his years. Luckily, there was a steamer sailing for San Francisco two days after our arrival. He paid his passage like a man, though from several remarks he gave us to understand he did not consider he had received his money's worth. Nevertheless, if the voyage aboard the *Ogre* had not proved a bed of roses, still he had had experiences he could talk about—which he loved

to do—and a fund of incident to fill his thoughts for the future.

On dividing the passage-money, my brother said, "Now I shall have the old girl painted; she deserves it." Meaning the *Ogre*. Steve's remark was, "Let's shift our bunks and get comfortably settled once more; then I'm going ashore to spread myself about." Which programme they proceeded to carry out.

In three or four days' time Bill found a post at one of the large stores, in spite of having absolutely no knowledge of French, and only such English as we had been able to teach him in a little over a month. He seemed quite satisfied with his lot, and we frequently saw him during his "dinner hour" sauntering under the shade of the flamboyants along the beach road, clad in a natty drill suit, coloured silk socks and tie, and a new white felt hat, accompanied by one or more Tahitian belles.

By the bye, I have always understood that Tahitian women are exceptionally beautiful. They certainly have glorious black hair, not at all frizzy, but long, and with a beautiful undulating wave in it, and their teeth are white and even; but beyond that, they did not

appear to me prettier than the women of other groups at which we touched. I do not allude to the half-castes, who, being partly French, have the added charm of complexion and vivacious expression.

It is a curious thing that, though most of the natives of Tahiti, if living near a village, have nice little wooden houses with two or more rooms, and usually a verandah, all fully furnished, they never live in them. If there is a door, it is always left open, that passers-by may be made envious by the glories within. All seem to have wooden or iron bedsteads, with good bedding and beautifully clean bed-spreads of white or some vivid colour, but these are never slept in.

If you walk round behind the house, under the trees you will see a shelter of wood, rush, or grass, and in that the entire family lives, eats, and sleeps.

With Bill's departure, and our passenger's good money burning holes in our pockets, we determined to have lunch and dinner ashore, so came to an arrangement with the proprietor of the "Diadem Hotel"; he also bought our bread, eggs, milk, etc., for us, as he could pro-

cure them in the market at a far lower price than a stranger would have to pay.

We called at the British Consulate for our letters, which had accumulated to a delightful degree. The Consul, a Canadian, was extremely friendly; he had charming quarters, with a wide verandah containing comfortable chairs and hammocks, which he put at our disposal, also books, magazines, drinks, and cigarettes. My brother spent nearly every morning there, writing or typing. The Consul, being a dentist also, was an exceedingly busy man, so we saw little of him except when he sometimes came aboard after dinner to sit under our awning and smoke. He offered us the use of his country camp at Mataiea, about twenty-five miles along the coast. Tahiti being intensely hot at that time, my brother and I took advantage of this kind offer, and spent a delightful week there, taking our own stores, and being done for by the housekeeper, quite a young Tahitian girl named Dahé, with a husband, and a baby about three months old.

The country camp, as the Consul called it, proved to be a glorified native house built of split bamboo, stained and varnished. It was

tastefully furnished, and consisted of one large living-room and bedroom, with dressing-room between ; but the verandah was the spot we haunted, for it was cool and faced the sea, which washed to within a few feet of the house at high tide.

We bathed morning and evening, read a great deal—for the shelves of the living-room were full of interesting books and periodicals—and went for some beautiful bush walks.

In many of the inland valleys one could almost imagine oneself in England ; meadows of tall grass, with a stream gently meandering through them, low hedges bearing a wild fruit rather like a blackberry, and cattle browsing quietly until they hear the evening call to the milking shed, when they raise their heads and low in response. And what do you think that cattle call is ? Though uttered by a chocolate-coloured native, or perhaps a Chinaman with a long pigtail, it is nothing more nor less than "John Bull." And a musical sound it is, with a long-drawn quaver on the last syllable.

I took Algie with us, so that he should have grass to wander over. He loved it, and used to bathe in a river, which bordered one side of

the garden, before entering the sea. The first time he waded in and swam out to the middle of the stream, and proceeded to sink. I was afraid he would be washed out to sea, and was just casting off shoes and stockings, when a little native boy appeared on the opposite bank, and, being intelligent, grasped the meaning of my frenzied efforts, and plunged into the stream, which proved to be quite deep, so I should have fared badly in my work of rescue. After that I tied a string to one of Algie's stumpy legs when he took a bath. Dahé thought he was brought along as a table delicacy, and asked me when we would like to have him cooked!

On our return to Tahiti, my brother had riggers and sail-makers aboard to see to repairs, and the *Ogre* received her coat of paint. Owing to these renovations above, I was inspired to have a thorough clean up below; so, when the boys had gone ashore one afternoon, I set to and cleaned all the paint in saloon and cabin, washed cushion covers and bedspreads, and was just preparing to cool down in a kimono on the saloon divan, with a book and cigarette, when the painter put his head through the skylight and told me I was being hailed from the shore.

I thrust my head through the engine-room hatch and, to my horror, saw a group of ladies and children standing on the edge of the Esplanade. They beamed upon me, and shouted that they wanted to come aboard and see the lady who had come so far in "that funny little boat." I ascended the ladder a step or two, to show them my *déshabille*, and explained that the paint was wet everywhere, but if they cared to come aboard at their own risk, I should be charmed, etc.—inwardly anathematising the whole lot. They asked how it was to be done. I explained that all they had to do was to step into the dinghy, unfasten the painter, and pull themselves, by means of the warp, to the stern of the *Ogre*, and then climb up. This they proceeded to do, amid much screaming and overbalancing, watched by a gathering audience on the beach road. When they reached the *Ogre*, they awaited instructions as to how the ascent was to be made.

Now it is a difficult thing to describe how a thing of that sort should be done, for so much depends on the clothes worn and the anatomy of the individual. Skirts may be too narrow and legs too short to allow of stretch-

ing the requisite distance for a foothold, and arms may not have the strength to pull up the weight of the body. So, regardless of the interested spectators on shore, I emerged from the shelter of the engine-room, and pulled and tugged until I succeeded in getting those nine women and children on board.

Luckily the paint was dry over the stern, but the hatches and deck were still sticky, so I conducted the party below through the engine-room, where introductions took place.

It seemed that Mrs. Seventh Day Adventist at Nuku Hiva had written to her colleagues at Tahiti to tell them of our coming, hence the invasion. But why come in such numbers? And oh! why bring young children? In spite of repeated warnings, the kiddies went on deck and climbed all over the hatches, then came below to show the damage done to their clothes. With their painty hands and feet they scrambled on to the saloon cushions, where the fond mothers proceeded to wipe down their respective offspring. No word of regret for the mess on the cushions, only distress at the damage done to muslin dresses and drill suits. I dreaded to go on deck and see the havoc wrought there,

and could hear the painter softly swearing to himself.

What with being hot and tired after the exertions of my spring cleaning, and peevish at this sudden invasion and its result, I am afraid I rather brusquely asked if they would prefer tea or "swizzles." "Thanks, no, we never drink tea, but 'swizzles' sounds rather nice; is it an iced drink?" I told them it was, and retired to the fo'castle to break the ice and mix the drink.

My brother came aboard at this juncture, and an explosion of "What the ——? Who the ——? Look here, who has made this infernal mess?" and the painter's voluble explanation could be heard; for although he could not speak a word of English, his own feelings made a bond of sympathy which bridged the disparity of mere language, and he understood the purport, if not the exact meaning, of my brother's outburst. Dead silence in the saloon, and then a low voice murmured, "I am afraid the children must have spoiled something upstairs." I called to my brother to come below and be introduced to our visitors, for I was afraid of what he might say next if

he did not know they were still aboard. It was really heroic the way he hid his feelings, and chatted about the beauty of the scenery and climate of Tahiti. Then he came out to the fo'castle, to hand the teacups, as he thought, but gave a gasp when he saw me with a tray of tumblers filled with beautiful golden liquid. "What is up? aren't they teetotallers?" he asked in a whisper. I am afraid I giggled, for I was beginning to feel weak and hysterical, and told him to just hand them round, and proceed as before, as he was doing very nicely. The "swizzles" were voted a complete success. "A delicious drink, so refreshing," one said. "You must certainly let me have the receipt before you leave. We find the effect of lime-squashes so terribly lowering, and this seems an ideal drink for children," was the verdict of another.

After their departure my brother and I laughed heartily, and felt better, but on recounting this episode to Steve, all he said was, "Beastly shame, I call it." And I have wondered since if it were.

Before leaving Tahiti we had the *Ogre's* copper cleaned below the water-line. Two

Paumotan divers did it in about three hours, with nothing but split coco-nut shells, in spite of her being very foul. And when they had finished she shone like gold.

The Paumotan divers have a habit which I believe is peculiar to themselves, and that is, as they come to the surface they emit a low musical whistle. Whether this helps proceedings I cannot say, but it is fascinating to listen to when several are at work together. They are such a jolly lot, too, and play over their work like great children. They remain under water for a great length of time; if working, three minutes is the record, but they have been known to stay down as long as five minutes, just as a test. They also go to great depths, but this is extremely injurious, for in time they suffer from what is called "the bends," or cramp, caused by the pressure of water. The effect of too much diving is to make their eyes protrude, and to stumble in their walk as if over an invisible object; eventually they become hopelessly paralysed. Women are also employed, and are more liable to "the bends" than men, as they are either more avaricious, or better workers, for the deeper

the shell lies, the better it is. A certain amount of pearling goes on round the Society Islands, but Paumotan divers are mostly employed, owing to their superior work.

One day my brother got into conversation with a New Zealand youth, who was demobilised, and waiting in Tahiti for his pension ; lacking the means to get away, he was running up a bill at a fifth-rate hotel. My brother asked him if he would be willing to go as far as Australia with us in the capacity of cook just for food and passage, as that would be well on his way home. He jumped at the idea, and said he had been used to cooking at sea. You can imagine the joy with which Steve and I received these tidings. So "Ray" was entered on the ship's papers as cook, and an excellent one he proved, going quietly about his work, and always ready to give a hand on deck if need be.

Through having our meals at the "Diadem," we became acquainted with two exceedingly nice Englishmen who had, on being demobilised, settled on Murea, an island near by, and started planting coco-nuts, vanilla, and marketable vegetables. They had brought over a cargo of

these articles in their launch to Papieté, when the engine broke down, and they were waiting for the repairs when we met them. As they were told it would take some weeks to put the engine in working order, they gladly accepted our offer to take them over to Murea on the *Ogre*, for they were uneasy as to how things were going there during their absence.

So we were quite a large party crossing the fifteen miles of sea that divide Tahiti and Murea.

The same pilot who had brought us inside the reef took us out, and we were able to thank him for the excellent results of his cockroach receipt—phosphorus, flour, sugar, and boiling water, mixed to a paste, spread on pieces of paper, and left in dark corners.

Mahini, the "head man" of our two English friends, met us in a canoe when about half a mile from shore, and was astonished to see his "bosses" aboard. It was as well for us that his curiosity had brought him out to investigate the strange craft, for the passage through the reef proved rather awkward to negotiate, and we had no chart. So Mahini came aboard, stood in the bows, and piloted us with gran-

diloquent gestures into Papetoia Bay, and we anchored about a hundred yards from the little jetty.

Murea is a perfect gem of an island, and, like Tahiti, consists of lofty volcanic peaks thickly covered with tropical growth.

There is a legend that the original inhabitants of Murea were divided into two hostile tribes—the "Valley Men," who lived on the lower levels, and the "Lizard Men," who kept to the heights. They never encroached on each other's domains except once a year, when a religious feast was held on the seashore. Then only were the "Lizard Men" allowed to descend and worship undisturbed with their enemies the "Valley Men." The feat of ascending and descending the precipitous mountain heights was accomplished by holding a staff in each hand, and leaning forward; in the distance, this gave them the appearance of lizards crawling up and down. I know it sounds very far-fetched, but our friends told us that there are tracts of land right up the mountains, which are almost inaccessible, that have evidently been under cultivation at some time.

Our two friends had a bachelor bungalow on the seashore shaded by coco-nut palms. They seemed happy enough, and were very sanguine about the future of their plantation, which was in its babyhood.

One of them was engaged to an English girl of eighteen, and was going to send for her in a month or two, but expected opposition from her parents, who thought the Society Islands too uncivilised and out of the world for a young girl to be happy in. I must say I agreed with them. Perhaps for the first few months the novelty would keep her amused, but after that, I cannot imagine an intelligent, energetic girl being content to live her life on an island, however beautiful, where she would be the only white woman. I said something of the sort to her fiancé, since he asked my opinion. He said he had promised her a horse as she was intensely keen on riding. Even then it meant she would have to keep to the track which ran round the island, and one soon wearies of the same ride day after day, when there is no object in view but exercise. I suggested that she might help on the plantation, and that perhaps making things

for her new home would keep her occupied, but was told it would be impossible for her to do manual labour, as she would lose prestige with the natives (awful thought), and that she was not the sort to like needlework and housekeeping, as she was too much of a sport; besides, the "boys" would do the latter. Then what would be left for the poor girl to do? I asked. "Oh, she could potter about, and then *I* should always be on hand," was the reply. What could be said to a man who thought along those lines?

We spent just a week on Murea, and a very pleasant time we had, bathing, fishing, and walking. Then one morning Mahini came aboard and piloted us through the reef passage, and we shaped our course for the Palmerston Islands.

No sooner were we well out to sea than we met with bad weather. Rain squalls followed one another, and we had to go carefully because the island of Tapamanu lay in our course, and at times they were so heavy that we could scarcely see the bows of the *Ogre* from the steering well. As evening came on, we were treated to a magnificent thunder-storm, which

lasted through most of the night, so one of us kept a look-out in the bows until daylight, when the wind rose considerably, increasing in force until the afternoon, when it suddenly died away altogether, and we lay rolling heavily in a rough sea, with not enough wind to keep the *Ogre* on her course. As we had plenty of sea-room, we lashed the tiller and endured the movement as best we could. This continued all through the following day, until we were utterly weary of it. Then a slight breeze sprang up towards evening, which dispersed the heavy clouds hanging round, and a sickle moon was revealed, soon to be swamped in a really bad rain squall. After that we forged ahead at about ten knots (which was a record for the *Ogre*) before half a gale, which lasted about five hours, then died to a dead calm.

We were not surprised at this weather, for all the schooner captains were lying snug in Papieté Harbour waiting for the hurricane season to blow itself out before proceeding on their respective trade routes. But if we had delayed in order to escape bad weather round the Society Islands, we knew we should not reach the coast of Australia before the north-

THE CREW IN UNDRESS UNIFORM

easterly gales set in, which would have been really a serious matter for us.

Therefore, with varying calms and squalls, we continued, until in nine days we sighted Palmerston Islands just before sunset.

We knew we could not make the group before dark, so lay off all night.

Getting under way about 8 a.m. we were met by three sailing dinghys, fine little crafts, handled in the most wonderful manner by the natives. They literally ran circles round the poor old *Ogre*, who was no ocean greyhound, the crews calling excitedly to know who we were and where we came from. To our amazement, it was English they spoke.

We asked them to pilot us through the passage in the reef, but they told us it would be impossible for a ship as large as the *Ogre* to get through ; so we had to drop our anchor outside the reef in a sheltered spot, and trust to luck. Fortunately the wind was off the land, so we had no fear of drifting on the reef if our anchor should drag.

Such an excited throng swarmed aboard us directly we came up into the wind. It seems that when they first saw us out at sea, they

took us for the annual schooner which calls at the group, but on drawing near they knew by our size we were a strange vessel.

The Palmerston group belongs to England, and is really one big atoll. I am no good at description, and I have never regretted the fact so much as now, when I want to tell you what Palmerston first looked like to me.

Try and imagine a wave-washed reef of coral, oval in shape, encircling a calm lagoon about four miles across in the widest part. From this reef, at irregular intervals, six islands of varying size rise about three feet out of the sea, and are crowned with coco-nut palms. Perhaps it is not actually the form of the group that strikes one as being so beautiful, but the colours are lovely beyond description. The lagoon, owing to unequal depths, is every shade of blue, green, and violet, which the sun exaggerates to an almost dazzling extent. Little white-tipped waves ripple up the coral slopes to the swaying green palms on the lagoon side of the reef; whilst outside, the huge combers dash with such force that the spray rises high into the air, in vivid contrast to the deep blue of the sky.

With self-possessed dignity, an elderly man

with grey fuzzy hair and beard, wearing cloth trousers and a very tight black alpaca coat, introduced himself as the patriarch of the island, William Marsters. Then proceeded a sort of roll-call. As he mentioned each man's name, he stepped forward, and either shook hands or grinned. What puzzled us was, that all bore the name of Marsters. This was explained to us afterwards.

VIII

The old and honourable family of Marsters—We turn our hands to commerce—Niué, or Savage Island—The *piea*-makers.

All set to and helped us make everything snug, then William Marsters asked us to go ashore in his dinghy and lunch with him.

We were treated to a fine exhibition of seamanship in making the passage through the reef, which was full of curves, and so narrow in parts that it only just allowed the boat to scrape through. The tide was in flood, and caused a perfect mill-race, over which we rushed at the rate of seven knots, to be brought up now and then with a staggering jolt against the heads of coral sticking up at intervals. How the boat stood such rough treatment was a marvel. At one point, two men and a boy climbed out, and with ropes hauled us over a very shallow bit, then clambered back just as we were caught in the swirl and carried into the calm lagoon beyond.

On reaching the beach in front of the village

we were carried ashore in divers undignified manners, and dumped down on the coral sand, to be received by several women and girls, who proved to be William Marsters's daughters, and escorted to their house, quite an imposing structure of wood hidden amongst palm trees.

While lunch was being prepared, one of the daughters, named Sarah, showed me the village. Some of the houses were just palm-woven huts, but others were built of wood procured from wrecks, and several of the houses had ship's bunks instead of bedsteads. Dogs and fowls seemed to flourish there, especially the latter, for they were not the usual scraggy variety, all legs and no feathers, to which one becomes accustomed in the tropics, but plump, well-feathered, self-respecting birds. I was much amused to see live turtles confined in large zinc baths outside one or two of the huts. When caught they are kept that way until they are needed for food.

I was surprised to see a cricket pitch, and Sarah told me that they played every evening, both women and men taking part in the game.

The little church, which was in course of erection, was a marvel of ingenuity, made of

wreckage, and the walls were entirely composed of panelled doorways taken from a French brigantine which was wrecked on Palmerston not long ago, owing to the crew playing cards below and neglecting to keep a look-out. I should think this group is a perfect death-trap to vessels having lost their bearings, for it rises out of the sea nearly three hundred miles from the nearest land, which happens to be the Cook Islands. Palmerston is not in a recognised trade route, so few ships visit there; when they do, it behoves them to have a care in picking up these islands, which can only be seen about ten miles off in the day-time, and not until one is nearly on them at night.

Sarah walked me right round the island, a distance of at *least* three-quarters of a mile; and by the time we reached the village again, lunch was ready. Besides the four of us, only William Marsters and his brother James, who is Resident Agent, sat at table. Two younger daughters, Martha and Anna, waited upon us, while women and children sat on stools or the floor near the open doorway, and watched and listened, but did not enter into the conversation.

Considering the island produces nothing but

coco-nuts and a little arrowroot, we had the most wonderful meal: turtle-soup, followed by an extraordinary shell-fish, whose flavour was a cross between oyster and paraffin oil; boiled fowl served with sweet potatoes; and, as a sweet, the cores of coco-nuts stewed in the milk squeezed from the meat of the nut. This was a most delicious dish, and I had to ask what it was, as I had not tasted it before; it gave the impression of a *soufflé* delicately flavoured with coco-nut. By the core I do not mean the white meat of the nut, but when a coco-nut is old it forms this core, from which springs the green shoot that will eventually become the palm.

In addition to the good things we ate, we were entertained by the history of Palmerston. William Marsters told us that the island is entirely populated by the descendants of his own father, who settled there in 1862 with three native wives, all speaking different dialects. They have intermarried and increased to the number of ninety-eight, and he might have added that, in spite of this unavoidable inter-breeding, they are a fine, healthy, intelligent-looking people.

His father procured a lease of the island from the British Government when he first settled there, and this has been renewed since ; but William Marsters is afraid that, on the present lease expiring, Palmerston will be incorporated with the Cook Islands, and so come under the New Zealand Government. As he is a strong Imperialist, this thought distresses the old man ; in fact, he waxed quite eloquent on the subject, and it was curious to hear a coloured native hold forth, in good English, on that theme.

All the inhabitants showed little or no sign of having white blood in their veins. The founder never allowed anything but English to be spoken, but now, amongst themselves, his descendants speak the native language learned from each individual mother, and work the land which descended through her to them ; thus each family inherits one-third of the island.

Finding out the relationship of one to another was an endless source of amusement to my brother ; for one small boy of seven proved to be uncle to a man of thirty, and a woman who appeared to be about thirty-five

was a sister of William Marsters, who looked quite sixty.

A few of the young men and women had been to other groups, and one or two of the former had brought back wives with them. One of these was a half-caste from Tahiti, who spoke a few shy words of French. She looked far more European than any of the community, and was a clever hat-maker. In fact she could weave what looked remarkably like a fine Panama hat of the fibre of the pandanus palm. Her husband had joined the Maori contingent of the New Zealand forces during the war; also about four other youths, all of whom returned safely to their little atoll.

Seeing the outside world had unsettled one boy, and he asked to be taken to Australia, but it was useless to think of doing so, as coloured labour is taboo there, though, of course, we could not give that as the reason, for they one and all looked upon themselves as English.

That reminds me of what happened one day when several men had been aboard to see us, and one had taken too much rum. When it began to get dark the others prepared to go

ashore, and went on deck with the boys. But the fuddled gentleman lingered in the fo'castle, repeatedly shaking me by the hand, and telling me what a pleasure it gave him to speak to a "real lady," etc. I called to one of the men on deck to fetch his erring cousin. For some reason this seemed to incense the inebriated one, for he rounded on me, and poured forth a perfect flood of invectives, saying I was turning him off the ship, and that he was as good a man as I was, etc. I was really interested, for I thought I had heard the boys use all the swear-words ever coined; but, of course, wishing to live up to his estimate of me as a "real lady," I had to appear shocked. The man, descending the ladder to retrieve his relative, took him by the shoulder, and said, "Stow it, remember you're an Englishman." That was all, but the result was instantaneous, and the poor fellow tumbled up the fo'castle ladder and into the boat, where he sat huddled and ashamed.

As no schooner had touched at Palmerston for seven months, we thought it a good opportunity to sell some of our "trade goods," so made it known what kind of things we had to

dispose of, and told the islanders we would be ready at ten o'clock one morning, if they cared to come and inspect our wares.

Steve, having the best head for figures, ran over the invoices in order to see what we ought to charge for our goods, in order to gain a fair profit, while my brother and I laid them out to the best advantage on the engine-room hatch. They made a brave show. Leather belts, knives, coloured handkerchiefs, pipes, fish-hooks, and mouth-organs for the men. Sateens of bright hues, flowered voiles, striped and spotted cottons, pocket mirrors and hair slides for the women.

Then we awaited our customers, and they came in full force, men, women, and piccaninnies. We served lime-squashes for those who wanted them, then got down to business. The voiles, some of which Steve had insisted upon keeping when I condemned them in London, went at once, to his huge delight. Indeed, within the first half-hour or so we had cleared all the materials, so, leaving my brother to attend to the wants of the men, I took some of the ladies below, to show them the interior of our floating home. They were delighted with

everything, the cupboards and lockers interesting them more than all, and I had to turn everything over, and exhibit my wardrobe to the smallest detail. Their constant question was, "Is that for sale?" The same happened when showing them the cupboards in the fo'castle; they wanted to buy everything. Poor things, many of them were quite out of some foodstuffs, and the idea occurred to me we might sell them such things as we could spare. So I went on deck and consulted with the boys. They were quite willing, but when I suggested that perhaps we ought to *give* the things that were so badly needed, Steve said, "Not on your life; they simply reek of money. That fat old dowager there has a pocket full of it." I was only too glad to hear it.

I asked the ladies to withdraw to the deck whilst I sorted out the stores we could spare, and with Ray's help collected quite an imposing-looking lot of jam, pickles, soap, rice, tea, cocoa, and limejuice, all of which we had ordered far too much.

Heads were thrust through the skylight, and eager brown eyes watched our movements with interest.

So there we were hard at it, my brother and Steve on deck selling trade goods, Ray in the fo'castle dispensing refreshments, and I in the saloon presiding over the grocery department. This went on to well in the afternoon, when one would have thought they would be weary of it all; but no, two girls came below and asked if I could let them have some handkerchiefs they had noticed. I replied that if I gave to them I should be obliged to do the same to all. But they wanted to *buy* them. That set me going again, and I pulled over all my belongings once more, and found a number of things I could spare, such as handkerchiefs, chiffon scarves, muslin collars, a spare hand-glass, bedroom slippers, note-paper, cigarettes, hairpins, cottons, needles, ribbons, and little odds and ends of jewellery I had brought in case they would come in. All went. Then my brother sold his revolver and some cartridges, a pair of boots, and some ties. Steve disposed of some pyjamas, an old felt hat, and two packs of cards. It all sounds ridiculous, but it was done with the utmost gravity.

When all was over, they asked for some music, so my brother gave them a solo on his

clarionet, and I sang; then they all went ashore, the boats laden with their purchases, and we totted up our takings. I think the only one on board who had not enjoyed himself was Algie, for after supper I went on deck to see if he had gone to bed, and found the poor old chap on his back, with his legs sticking straight up in the air. How long he had been in that undignified position I dread to think.

The day after the sale, my brother went off early with several of the men to explore the reef and take photographs. Steve and Ray accompanied others on a shooting expedition, and brought back a good bag of wild duck. Sarah and her youngest sister, Mary, took me in a canoe on the lagoon.

Most extraordinary heads of coral appeared above the water in places, many formed like animals, and one exactly like a little church. In places, coral had grown to the level of the water, and we got out of the canoe and waded over it. I do not know what causes the coral to take on the lovely shades it does, but it forms the most beautiful background for the coloured shells, fish, and seaweed that grow in

the pools ; they look like miniature scenes out of the Arabian Nights.

We paddled across the lagoon to one of the smaller islands where there was a large hut built of palm trunks and leaves. There the Marsters's stored their copra (sun-dried coco-nut) until a schooner came to carry it to Raratonga, in the Cook Islands, the output realising, on an average, £1000 a year. Not bad for a mere speck in the Pacific Ocean.

On another island at the far end of the lagoon I saw smoke rising, and asked Sarah what was going on there. She hesitated a moment, then told me it was the leper island, where a brother and sister were isolated. Not liking to ask, I still wonder how they first contracted that terrible disease, for William Marsters told me no illness had been known on the island except dysentery, and sometimes a little fever. They even escaped pneumonic influenza, which had been rife everywhere else we had touched at. Cuts, burns, and slight accidents were the sum-total of their mishaps, and on those occasions Marsters doctored them from a primitive medicine chest, consisting of a cardboard box full of half-empty bottles. We gave him what

we could spare of iodine, chlorodyne, plaister, and lint bandages. He commissioned my brother to send several things from Sydney, amongst others, an enlargement from a quaint old-fashioned photograph of his father, the founder of the family of Marsters. Added to this, we carried letters to be posted on our arrival in Australia, so the *Ogre* rose to the dignity of a mail-boat.

It was with many regrets that we left this lovely little island and its genial, kindly inhabitants, and they appeared to be genuinely sorry when we told them we must be getting on our way.

The day before we sailed there was a constant stream of visitors on board, both to say good-bye and wishing to make a few more purchases. I had been making bead necklaces in my odd moments of idleness, ever since we started from England. Some were really pretty, and these I gave to the women, the less elaborate ones to the children. The boys depleted themselves of tobacco and me of cigarettes in order to make little presents to the men. Matches also proved a very acceptable gift, as they were a necessity

that was getting low. We had laid in £5 worth to start with, so had an ample supply.

Nearly every woman who came aboard that last day gave me a fan, woven from the split leaves of the coco-nut palm, or a shell necklace, and sometimes both. I had to wear the necklaces, as it seemed the etiquette of the occasion to place them over my head with their own hands, and I was absolutely festooned and weighed down with them. Some were beautiful, the arrangement of the colouring being quite artistic.

On the morning of our departure, three boatloads of men and boys came to see us off, and fell over each other in their eagerness to be of help in getting us under way, which we did about nine o'clock, and set our course for Niué, or Savage Island, after looking our last at what is said to be the first island ever discovered in the South Seas, and called San Pablo by Magellan. But others say Captain Cook was the discoverer. It is definitely known that he landed later, on his third voyage in those waters.

Nothing of interest happened during the five

days' passage, and I sighted Niué during my 4–8 night watch.

When we neared land, canoes shot out from the villages along the coast, and paddled alongside for as long as the natives could keep pace, shouting a welcome. One or two spoke English, and when asked how they came to know our language, said they had been in the Great War and fought with the New Zealanders. In this way we were escorted along the west coast of the island until we came to Alofi, where we dropped anchor.

In a very short time the Commissioner, the port official, and the doctor (a half-caste Maori) came off, and we all went below to have a chat.

It seemed that a schooner ran five or six times between April and December, from New Zealand to Niué, and as the first one of the season was considerably overdue, and they had no means of knowing why, they were very anxious about her. When we were reported as coming down the coast, they thought we were a relief ship sent by the New Zealand Government. We were sorry to disappoint them, and said so, but they very courteously told us that they were pleased we had honoured

their little island by choosing it as one of our ports ; and furthermore, they insisted that we should all stay ashore during our visit, which we accordingly did, my brother and I going to Government House, Steve to the doctor's, and Ray to the house of the port official, who had just married a pretty Niuéan girl.

Niué was discovered by Captain Cook in 1774, but when he tried to land, he was received with such hostility by the natives, that he called it Savage Island, at which the present-day natives are very indignant, for they say their ancestors were only protecting themselves against white men's diseases. They proved themselves right, for now they suffer from consumption, ophthalmia, and skin diseases of all sorts. The Commissioner, who had only lately been appointed to that position, and seemed immensely keen on improving the condition of the natives, said that a house-to-house visitation and a heavy fine for not notifying the doctor of illness had done wonders, as now diseases could be treated in their earlier stages.

Niué is an island of upheaved coral, and formed in terraces, the lower one about 90

feet, and the higher one 200 feet above sea level. In parts of the island there are huge chasms between these two platforms. Nearly all the villages and plantations are round the coast, and the interior of the island, which is about 100 square miles in extent, is seldom visited, as the growth is so dense. Valuable wood is to be found there, but as the difficulties of transport to the coast would be so great, it is not thought worth while to exploit that industry.

At one time, hats of pandanus were the chief export, the natives being very deft plaiters; but of late years the industry seems to have died out. However, the Panama plant is to be acclimatised if possible, and then it is hoped this trade will be revived. Meanwhile, copra is the only export worth mentioning.

The Niuéan is not a prepossessing individual as a rule, and, to me, looked a lower type of native than any I had seen before: smaller of stature, and less intelligent of physiognomy; yet those who attended the Mission School were of average intellect, I was told. They are hard workers, and, in consequence, are sought after as labourers; as they are of a roving disposition, they gladly go elsewhere, but this is now being discouraged.

BAROMETER AND SELF AT HOME

My brother and I thoroughly appreciated our comfortable quarters at Government House. Mrs. Commissioner insisted upon our breakfasting in bed each day, and the shower baths were a great joy, though we were asked to be as careful as possible with the water, for they depended solely on the rainfall, there being no fresh water on the island owing to the porous soil.

The doctor took me one day on his rounds, and we visited three different villages in a Ford car. I am sure no other motor would have stood the roads, mere hummocky tracks for the most part. Twice we were badly stuck, owing to recent rain. Happily, each time it occurred near a village, so help could be easily found, and the process of extricating the car seemed to be a source of great delight to the natives; in fact, Niuéans laugh at next to nothing, or so it seemed to me, though perhaps I lacked a sense of humour when I found myself the apparent cause of their risibility; for at each village where the doctor had a case, I remained in the car to see it was not tampered with, and was always surrounded by a crowd of black faces and gleaming teeth. Such teeth too! Most island natives I have seen have a

jolly, childish laugh, full of merriment and good-humour, but somehow the Niuéans' laugh made me feel creepy, for it was just a noise—and an ugly one at that. As I could not carry on conversation with them, I tried to smile in return, but only succeeded in giggling inanely, thankful that I had no white companion to see my exceedingly poor performance. The doctor's wife (a full-blooded Maori) told me afterwards that she had ceased accompanying her husband on his rounds, because she could not stand the strain of wearing a constant grin.

A little albino boy about twelve years old lived in one village, and it looked most incongruous for a negro type of face to be pale pink with eyes like gooseberries, and crinkled hair to be tow-coloured instead of black. He was suffering from a horrible skin complaint that caused raw blotches to appear all over his face and body ; these he scratched incessantly, and the flies settled on them in the most nauseating manner.

One curious custom of the Niuéans is, to bury their dead by the roadside at any spot that appeals to them, and then to place on the grave some article beloved of the dear departed—earthen vessels, a saucepan, hat, or pair of old

boots. On one grave I saw a rusty sewing-machine, and Mrs. Commissioner told me how she had coveted it when she first came to Niué, as her own machine had not arrived, and she had to make the curtains by hand.

The natives consume a large amount of *piea* (arrowroot), which grows prolifically on the island. The season for collecting and preparing it had just started when we arrived, so Mrs. Commissioner, her little girl, and I went down to the beach to watch the process.

Only one family works at a time, and has to remove all implements used in the preparation when they have finished, and the next family brings its own.

It was wonderful the result they procured from such primitive methods, and the apparatus was most ingenious.

On a small stretch of coral sand, about a dozen men, women, and children were hard at work. The old women scraped off the discoloured outside of the roots with sharp pieces of coco-nut shell, and threw them into a basket made of plaited palm leaves. When full, sea-water was poured over it, and it was carried by children to two men, who sat on a fine coco-nut mat with legs spread wide apart. They grated

the roots into a coarse powder with rough instruments made of small cylindrical-shaped pieces of wood, wound at intervals of about an eighth of an inch with sinnet (tightly twisted coco-nut fibre, tough as catgut, but much rougher). The powder fell on to the mat between their legs, and was carried away by girls to a rude erection of four bamboos supporting a palm-leaf roof, for the heat of the sun injures the *piea* when it has been reduced to powder. Under this shed was a kind of cradle, made by lashing bamboos crossways and stretching finely woven coco-nut fibre over them, thus forming a primitive filter for the powder that the girls tipped into it. The women fetched sea-water in kerosene tins or any other receptacle, and poured it slowly and gradually over the powder in the cradle, while a man kneaded and squeezed it continually. This required great strength, so he was frequently relieved by men who squatted near by smoking and waiting their turn. The thick white liquid produced in this manner drained through the fibre into a wide trough on the ground, made from the bark of some huge tree, bent up in order that the liquid could rise

to the level of about six inches, and then overflow. A child squatted each side of this trough and stirred the contents with coco-nut shells, and at intervals added more sea-water. When the sediment seemed to be overflowing with the water, the bark trough was gently raised one side by three or four men, and the clouded sea-water flowed away, leaving the sediment several inches thick clinging to the trough, the refuse from the filter being thrown into the sea.

Then we were politely asked to retire, as the last process of washing the *piea* in fresh water was not for the eyes of white folk, who would turn it sour by looking at it.

Mrs. Commissioner and I strolled back to Government House, thinking her little daughter was just behind us. But, wishing to see this forbidden rite, she had hidden behind some rocks, and being seen by the natives, was chased away with stones. She came flying up the verandah steps, crying with fright, to be comforted by her mother, but severely reprimanded by the Commissioner, who told her she deserved the treatment she had received.

IX

Feasting and speeches—We sail for the Tonga Islands—A close shave—Arrival at Nukulofa—Good-bye to *Ogre*.

The following day we were invited to a feast given by the paramount chief, a venerable grey-haired native. As he thought his house not imposing enough, he asked the doctor and his wife to lend their dining-room, which they most good-naturedly did. Neither would he join us at table, much to our regret. But he stood in the doorway to receive us on our arrival, and when dinner was served he inspected each dish as it was brought in by his women.

The only delicacies I recognised were sucking-pig, sweet potatoes, taro root, and baked bananas, but one dish followed another until we were full to repletion. Still they plied us, and the doctor told us to be sure and not refuse anything, or it would wound the sensibilities of our host, so we went on stuffing.

When all was cleared away, the chief came in, and sat on the edge of a chair, and there was a pause. Then he beckoned to a young woman

in European dress, who entered and said she was going to act as interpreter, for she was a pupil at the Mission ; and this post she filled wonderfully well.

The chief stood up, took off the wide straw hat he had worn all the time, and placed it carefully on the chair he had vacated, then gave vent to a long oration. We tried to look intelligent and interested, but speaking for myself, I only felt a vast torpor creeping over me, owing to the heat and a too abundant repast.

The sum-total of his speech was, that he felt overwhelmed by the honour we had done him by choosing his little island to visit ; we, who were used to the beautiful land he had been told England was. That the captain and the mate must be very brave warriors to cross so many miles of tempestuous ocean in order to see him and his people ; and the lady, whom he had heard worked and dressed like a man, must be very strong. That our ship, though small, must have been built by great artisans to carry us so far safely. When we returned to England, would we describe to the Great King all the things we had seen on Niué, and tell him how loyal his people were.

"Now it's your turn," said the doctor, turning to my brother, as the chief sat down on his hat by mistake.

I had never heard my brother speechify, and felt sure he would make a mess of it, so was relieved when he turned to Steve and said, "You're better at this sort of thing than I am, so heave ahead."

To my surprise, without a moment's hesitation, Steve rose, not daring to glance at us, and in a flood of flowery language spoke our thanks for the kind reception and noble feast we had been given ; our delight when we had sighted Niué on the horizon, and found it as beautiful as we had been led to believe ; indeed, far more so, for on drawing nearer, the island had seemed to us as a gem dropped into the ocean ; in very sooth, was it not one of the jewels of the British Empire ? etc., etc., etc.

After this flow of rhetoric, Steve mopped his brow and sat down. Then a dear old grey-haired woman, in a red-and-white spotted pinafore dress, came into the room with a large straw hat in her hand, walked straight up to me, and without a word caught hold of the brim of the Panama hat I was wearing, meaning

to take it off ; much to her surprise, it remained firmly fixed on my head, owing to the hatpins, and she shook it well before I could whip them out. Then she smiled, and jammed the hat she was carrying over my forehead and eyes, and backed a few paces to see the effect, which must have been ludicrous ; I heard a strangled gulp from Steve, and my brother laughed outright. After settling the hat at a more comfortable and, I hope, becoming angle, I shook hands warmly with her, and asked our interpreter to say how pleased I was with the gift, and how astonished my friends in England would be to see the skill with which Niuéans could weave hats. The interpreter told me afterwards that the dear old soul never made hats now, but had worked hard at this one to finish it before I left Niué.

On our way back to Government House we met an aged and bent woman, who stood still in the middle of the road and literally gibbered at us. When I tried to pass, she caught hold of my hand and shook it with astonishing vigour for one of her decrepit appearance.

I asked the doctor, who accompanied us, what it was all about, and he told me the poor

old thing had walked fifteen miles to see the woman in man's clothing! But she thought she had been deceived, as I was wearing a beautiful white dress, and looked too weak to do all the wonderful things she had heard about. The doctor said she must have started before daylight in order to walk that distance, for she was very feeble. I felt terribly embarrassed, as I had neither money nor any trinket on me that I could give her. But feeling in my pocket, I discovered a little comb I always carry, and also a tube of lip-salve, as my lips dry and crack in a hot climate, and these I handed to her, the latter because it was bright and shiny. She evidently realised what the comb was for, but twisted the cosmetic in her fingers and looked puzzled until the top fell off and the creamy white substance protruded; this she instantly bit off and ate with evident relish. A reproduction of this scene might prove a novel advertisement for the Vinolia Company.

The day before we left I went to the little store to order a few necessities. The storekeeper was a half-caste Niuéan, an elderly man, and son of one of the first white people who settled on the island. He had a most interest-

ing collection of ancient weapons, tools, and dresses. I wanted to buy one or two things, but he would not part with them ; nevertheless, he presented me with some native baskets, fans, and two *si-sis*, or grass shirts, one undyed and short, hardly reaching to the knees, and having very cleverly made little rosettes round the waist. The other one was longer and far more gorgeous, being dyed vivid colours. I saw none of the women of Niué clothed in *si-sis*, they all seemed to wear the hideous pinafore of coloured print approved of by all the missionaries in the islands.

We left Niué after staying there four days, with quite a big budget of letters for New Zealand, which we eventually posted on arriving in Australia.

Our next objective was the Tonga, or Friendly Islands, so called because Captain Cook was received in a very different manner to that of Niué.

Although 300 miles from the 180th Meridian, the Tonga Islands are within the radius of "Eastern time," so we had to drop a day out of the calendar, which we did when three days out of Niué.

On the fourth day we sighted the Tonga Islands, but lay off that night with our usual caution. The wind completely died down, and when light next morning, we discovered that we were in a sort of horse-shoe of reefs, that meant we had drifted several miles north. As there was a head wind, we had to tack out again, and we were thankful there was room in which to do this with safety, but it took us all day to work our way round the south of the group to Tonga Tabu, the largest island, and there we had to lie off again for the night.

We had no large-scale chart of this group, and were very anxious about the approach, as "Sailing Directions" said great care was required to make the entry into the passage of the reef, for it was narrow and tortuous, besides being very shallow in patches.

We pulled up short of the "Narrows" before we saw the signal station, which was right down on the sand-spit level with the sea. After waiting a little while, a flag was run up in answer to ours, but nothing else occurred.

Ray went up the mast to see if we could negotiate the passage alone, but reported that it looked tricky, so we lay in the blistering sun

awaiting the pilot, and scanning the shore through telescope and binoculars for some sign of life, when we suddenly discovered we were perilously near the reef where it closed in like a funnel. For once the engine went without a kick, but not having reversing gear, there was still the risk of there being insufficient room in which to turn, for we did not know if the reef sloped gradually or suddenly into the sea. If the former, it would be impossible to scrape round, as we found there was a three-knot current carrying us on to it. I was at the tiller, and from my point of view it looked an impossible feat, so I shouted to my brother, who was up for'ard, to know what I had better do. "Hard a starboard," he yelled. "Starboard it is." And round we went, at the same time being carried sideways by the current. We held our breath, and stared with apprehensive eyes at the reef, which seemed to be rushing towards us. Momentarily we expected to strike it broadside on; but, no, still we glided round, missing it by a bare three feet. So, with sighs of relief, we entered the "Narrows."

Just then a canoe came in sight, down the

passage of the reef. The occupant was paddling furiously against the current, and when he got near enough, shouted for a rope to be thrown. By aid of this he scrambled aboard, leaving his canoe to be carried away from under him. He sank on the hatch and panted, then seized the tiller out of my hand, and proceeded to steer us through the passage. I hastened to fetch him a refreshing drink, after which he revived somewhat and told us that, thinking we were an island schooner, he had taken the pilot flag for a burgee, so had not hurried, for the pilot boat was somewhere in the harbour at the time. Then he saw us in difficulties, so paddled off in a canoe, which was no light task, as it was some distance from the pilot station to the "Narrows," where we were waiting. He said the canoe did not matter, and would be found somewhere and at some time.

It was a good thing that we waited for him, as the passage proved to be exceedingly "tricky," as Ray had described it from aloft.

We fastened to a Government buoy just off the jetty at Nukulofa at 11 a.m., and the doctor came aboard with the harbour master, both of whom admired the *Ogre*. The former wished

the Government would buy such a vessel for him to make his round of the outlying islands, and I was astonished to hear my brother say he would consider an offer, as he thought of selling the *Ogre*. He had once or twice hinted at this, but I always thought he was "pulling my leg."

The doctor lunched aboard with us, then took Steve and me for a motor drive to Houma, about seven miles across the island, where there were some wonderful blow-holes.

They certainly were a unique sight. The coral on that coast is in a series of broad, flat platforms, with overhanging edges perforated with holes, and when the wind sets inshore, as it did that day, the combers dash against the platforms, and burst through the holes with reports like cannon, forcing the water up in jets of spray like fountains, upon which the sun plays, creating the most delicate iridescent colours.

During this drive I noticed that the houses, all built of plaited fibre or coco-nut leaves, were oval in form, much prettier, to my mind, than the usual square or oblong ones.

The vegetation was very varied and beautiful, and the sensitive plant, which is looked upon

as a weed there, grew over everything, and was exceedingly dainty with its pale mauve-pink balls of blossom. I was struck with the greenness of the vegetation in general, and the vitality of the grass, which grew most prolifically, some of the by-roads being almost carpeted with it.

I had no opportunity of studying the native life, for, alas! soon after Steve and I returned from our drive, my brother came aboard with a terrible-looking Japanese basket, and announced the fact that the "old girl" was sold; that the island steamer, which had arrived the morning before, sailed at 5 p.m., so we had just three hours in which to pack up our belongings, unless we waited for the next boat a month hence.

It was not exactly a surprise, after what my brother had said to the doctor, but it certainly was a blow of a staggering nature. Apart from realising that our cruise was ended, it seemed somehow treacherous to sell the *Ogre*, and leave her there in the Pacific, after she had carried us so safely and staunchly for all those months. Then the practical side had to be thought of. How in the world were we to pack

our impedimenta without trunks? For everything of that sort had been stored at Brixham on sailing.

I didn't wait to ask details of the bargain, but said I was going ashore to buy a large trunk, and were the boys coming too? My brother said, "No trunks to be had, only baskets like the one I have here." Steve said, "I wouldn't be seen dead with luggage like that."

So off I rowed to the store alone, and bought two baskets and straps, and a huge camphor-wood chest, the hinges of which had come adrift, and whose lock had no key. It was crawling with spiders and other weird-looking insects, and filthily dirty, as it had been stowed away in the shed. The storekeeper promised to have it cleaned, and the hinges screwed on properly, and to send it with the baskets to the jetty, where our dinghy was lying.

I went to the doctor's house to explain matters, as we had promised to dine with him that evening. He met me on the verandah, saying he knew all about it, and he was sorry the Government had not bought our craft, but that she would make a splendid cargo-boat for the company who had, at which I inwardly

winced, for I knew that meant gutting her, and making one big hold where the white-enamelled saloon and cabin were.

Anyhow, the deed was done, and there was no use regretting ; so, much to the amusement of the "boys" loading copra on the steamer the other side of the jetty, I rowed off with my chest and baskets.

You should have seen Steve's face when I called out to him to help lift the chest aboard. He was wrestling with his packing below, and emerged on deck perspiring and cross. "Jumping Jehoshaphat! What do you want with a house like that?" he asked. I told him that, whatever else I had to leave behind, I was determined to take my house-linen, plate, and cutlery with me.

I found the storekeeper had neither cleaned nor repaired the chest, so had to do the former, while Ray did the latter. It soon dried in the sun sufficiently for me to pack, but I found it impossible to put any of the presents and things collected during our travels into the space, so overboard they went with some half-worn out clothes.

Whilst packing my tortoiseshell swizzle-stick,

I suddenly thought of Algie. What was to become of him? I called the boys on deck, and they came up to talk over his fate. Steve suggested leaving him on board for the future owner to make either a mascot or a meal of him. I wanted to tie a weight to him and drown him, which sounds cruel, but I would far rather know a pet is dead than be uncertain of its treatment in the future.

My brother solved the problem by rowing ashore, and presenting our ugly but entertaining mascot to the harbour master, who had taken a great fancy to him. As there was a nice garden to the harbour master's house, and he had no children to worry Algie, I felt fairly happy about him, but have often wondered since if he has wandered away and died of hunger and thirst. He had never been used to forage for himself, and though he might be able to find plenty of green-stuff to eat, there are no ponds or rivers, as far as I know, on Tonga Tabu, and I am sure he must miss the orange I quartered and pipped each morning before breakfast.

A message was sent from shore to say that the steamer was delayed, and would not sail until seven o'clock, so having finished all our packing,

we had our last meal aboard the *Ogre*. Ray outdid himself, for he opened every tin that sounded at all toothsome ; for, as he said, what was the use of leaving good food which was not included in the purchase of the ship ? When one began to think, there was quite a lot to which this applied—our pretty willow-pattern tea service, after-dinner coffee set, liqueur glasses, down pillows, and cushions with covers I had embroidered to tone with the upholstery of the saloon and cabin, to say nothing of the piano. All went with the ship, for there was no time to sell the things, which might have fetched good prices in an out-of-the-way spot like the Friendly Islands. Had we waited for the next steamer, it would have meant putting in a month in Nukulofa, which we were loath to do now the *Ogre* was no longer our home.

My brother paid our fares to Sydney, according to contract on starting, but I felt a homeless, depressed wanderer when we boarded the *Navua* with our awful-looking luggage, bound for Samoa, Fiji, and eventually Sydney ; and as we steamed out of the harbour, my brother and I leaned over the ship's rail and gazed our last at the *Ogre*, lying at anchor, deserted.

Very meanly, I hoped his feelings were as acute as mine.

We had not been three days at sea when he came to me and said : " What a blithering idiot I was to part with the *Ogre*. Listen to the row those kids are making ! Just look at those fat women imbibing beef-tea ; why do they need nourishment at eleven o'clock when they are already bursting? Have you ever seen such an uninteresting crowd before ? And when I go to our cabin in order to write in peace, Steve and the other chap start arguing. Oh, for the peace and quiet of one's own ship ! "

This outburst was as oil upon an open wound, for I knew that some time, somehow, there was the hope of once more sailing our own ship, though never another to be compared with the dear old *Ogre*.

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